University of Alberta

The Hallway: Old Voices for New Direction in Alberta Social Studies Curriculum

By

Andrew Malcolm Breckenridge ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Department of Secondary Education

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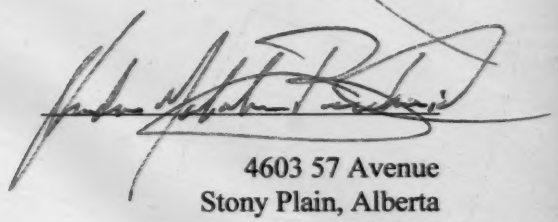

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Hallway: Old Voices for New Direction in Alberta Social Studies Curriculum" submitted by Andrew Malcolm Breckenridge in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Jim Parsons

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Jerry Kachur

Thesis approved on the 2nd day of JANUARY, 2003.

For my parents, who never missed an opportunity to encourage me.

Abstract

This thesis is a critical re-examination of the primary goal and the knowledge objectives of the current high school social studies program of studies in Alberta using philosophies from the past and present. My objective in this thesis has been to ascertain whether the knowledge objectives of the Alberta Senior High Social Studies Program are reflective of the primary goal of the program. To answer this question the philosophies of Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, and Charles Taylor were used develop a comprehensive understanding of the primary goal of the 2000 Alberta social studies curriculum guide and, using that understanding, the primary goal was compared to the knowledge objectives.

This thesis, in ascertaining the relationship between the knowledge objectives and the primary goal, is limited to only the curriculum documents published by Alberta Learning.

Acknowledgments

"Poet, you who must guide me, before you trust me to that arduous passage, look to me and look through me – can I be worthy?"[1]

This has been a journey. I have likened this endeavour to a historical sailing voyage of exploration where the world has melted away into a sea of blue and all you are left with are your thoughts and the voices of those you meet along the way. Like Dante, I have doubted whether I have been worthy of this journey and have been thankful for the presence of guides who have illuminated the darkness. For the past four years all I can remember thinking about has been social studies education, citizenship theory, democratic theory, and philosophy. These were not distant thoughts, but rather living parts of my personality and the stars that have guided this journey.

The work that I have done has been the result of the efforts of many people. These have included my parents, Court and Lynn Breckenridge, my siblings, Andrew and Christy Ness, and my friends who have been overwhelmingly patient and understanding over the years. I would also like to thank God for carrying me when I did not have the strength to continue my journey.

I have also had the benefit of working with some of the most insightful and knowledgeable professionals in the field. These people include Dr. Jim Parsons, Dr. George Richardson, Dr. David Hammond, Dr. Jerry Kachur, Dr. Robert Anderson, and Victor Lehman. These individuals have earned my respect and admiration over the years as they have guided me in my journey and I am deeply indebted to them.

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[1]Dante Alighieri. The Divine Comedy: The Inferno. Trans. John Ciardi. (Toronto, Canada: George J. McLeod Limited © 1970) p. 8.

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Introduction

Imagine a hallway. This hallway has no beginning and no end. Throughout the hallway are a series of doors, evenly spaced, on each side. As we walk through this hallway we can hear voices – hundreds, thousands, perhaps even millions – but above these voices we can hear the resounding echoes of a few. These few voices have withstood the test; they are the guides who have laid the foundations and directed our paths throughout the progression of time. When we stop and listen to the guides, we cannot help but recognize the imperative paths they have set before us. It is up to us to listen and look. Far too often we fail to do so.

The resounding voices in the hallway of time have had a profound affect on the development of modern societies. These voices have included individuals such as Plato (477?-347? BC), Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) to name a few. These individuals put forth ideas that served to revolutionize modern Western thought and society.

In reading their works, and those of other authors, one cannot help being profoundly influenced by their thoughts. We are moved to introspection. Just as these philosophers affect the individual, they also affect societies and the institutions. Although each author has had a profound impact in the past, their influence has dwindled over time. As recognition and awareness dwindles, their voices are eroding in their influence to hold together the foundations of the very institutions and governing structures that have been built upon them.

As residents of a country, and more specifically members of a nation-state, we surrender a portion of our sovereignty to the state in return for the state's protection of our

rights. The functionality of this relationship is contingent upon the individual's enlightened knowledge of that individual's relationship to the state. If the individual is ignorant of his or her rights or of the authority of the state over the individual, then the relationship between individual rights and state authority becomes precarious. This precarious nature, which creates a distinction between a protective and an oppressive relationship regarding the rights of the individual within society, has been a contentious topic. To maintain the balance of this relationship, individuals within society must be (and continue to be) allowed to have a critical understanding of their rights and the role of the state.

The Purpose of This Thesis

This thesis is a critical re-examination of the primary goal and the knowledge objectives of the current high school social studies program of studies in Alberta using philosophies from both past and present. My objective in this thesis has been to ascertain whether the knowledge objectives of the Alberta Senior High Social Studies Program are reflective of the primary goal of the program.

This thesis, in ascertaining the relationship between the knowledge objectives and the primary goal, is limited to only the curriculum documents published by Alberta Learning. The impact of a curriculum of achievement and the impact of diploma exams is a real and important influence on the effectiveness of social studies curriculum but one that should be examined after the curriculum itself has undergone critical analysis. My arguments in this thesis will only relate to the program of studies for the Alberta senior high social studies program. This thesis will not examine the defacto curriculum of diploma exams or actual teaching practice. I acknowledge that these factors also impact

on the effectiveness of the social studies program but believe that to examine them along with the curriculum will only result in a generalized analysis of the program rather than a specific analysis of problem areas within the curriculum. By examining the curriculum as an isolated document, we can more clearly identify where the knowledge objectives fail to fulfill the primary goal thus creating opportunities to identify possible reform.

The necessity to engage in a study of this nature cannot be understated. These very foundations and objectives affect the empowerment of the individual. Through an educational system, the state must enable its citizens to become critical thinkers who, as citizens, can contribute to society as citizens. In Canada, this process of creating responsible citizens falls upon the educational system and, more specifically, it is the primary goal of the social studies curriculum[2].

This thesis will re-examine some of the underlying philosophies that create the foundations of Alberta high school social studies curriculum today. This re-examination will act as a pause in the eternal white hallway as we listen to the voices of Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey and, more recently, Charles Taylor. Through these authors one can attempt to reach back into the foundations of the curriculum and find the roots of social studies education and, from those roots, find guidance in understanding the current curriculum and formulating a progressive path by which the curriculum may evolve.

Through the critical analysis of social studies curriculum this thesis is designed to build a concrete foundation upon which future social studies curriculum can be

[2] For the purposes of the thesis, the terms 'program of studies' and 'curriculum' will be used interchangeably in reference to the Alberta Senior High School Social Studies Curriculum.

constructed. By identifying whether the knowledge objectives and the primary goal are congruent this thesis also provides rationale for change in the current curriculum. It also identifies possible directions for change through the identification of weaknesses that exist in the current curriculum.

It is my intention to continue this research through the development of a new curriculum using the philosophical understandings developed here as the underlying framework for the curriculum. This thesis will act as a starting point from which new curriculum can be developed based on the primary goal. It is my belief that a new curriculum based on the framework presented throughout this thesis will be able to more effectively meet the primary goal of social studies education and facilitate greater critical thinking capacities as related to the social studies for students.

Definition of Terms

Within this thesis special attention is given to the primary goal, the knowledge objectives, and the paradoxical relationships that exist within the Alberta social studies curriculum. To fully understand the ideas and theories within this document is imperative that the meaning of certain terms be clarified.

In conducting this study, I have referred to students' ability to "think critically" and to use their own "reason". Before proceeding, it is important to outline what meaning I have assigned to those terms.

The use of the term "critical thinking" that is used in this thesis can be generally described as the "the ability to acquire knowledge, to interpret and communicate

information, and to solve problems and make decisions."[3] Under this general definition students should be perceived as "self-motivated, self-directed problem solvers and decision makers who are developing the skills necessary for learning and who develop a sense of self-worth and confidence in their ability to participate in a changing society."[4] The development of the necessary skills to do this is commonly achieved through the encouragement of activities such as decision-making, problem solving, and participation in inquiry strategies. These activities commonly encourage four activities; (1) the development or identification of a question, issue, or problem; (2) the development of a plan or procedures for guiding research; (3) the gathering, organizing, and interpretation of information; and (4) the development of a conclusion/solution and possible actions based on the conclusion/solution[5]. Although there are some deviations between each of these activities they all have these four primary characteristics. Through the development of these skills students develop the capacity to "think critically" about issues and independently formulate solutions to issues and problems that exist in society.

Throughout this thesis I also refer to the use one makes of their capacity to use "reason". The use of the term reason stems primarily from the use of Kantian philosophy although I do not place the same degree of emphasis on the power of reason as Kant does in his critique of pure reason. Like Immanuel Kant and John Locke, I believe that humankind does not have an *innate* knowledge but rather knowledge is something that accumulates through our interactions with the world, our experience. With this

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[3] Alberta Education, Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Guide (10-20-30), (Edmonton, Alberta, 1991.), p. 1.

[4] *Ibid.*

understanding it is possible to understand reason as the applied use of one's critical thinking skills in the identification of issues and the formulation of solutions to those issues. Since reason can be defined as the application of critical thinking skills for the purposes of this thesis it is important to identify the underlying conditions that must be present for this process to occur. For one to make use of their reason or to apply their critical thinking skills they must have the freedom to apply those skills in the public sphere[6]. This condition must be met in order for an individual to develop the capacity to apply their critical thinking skills thus developing their capacity to use their reason.

It is also necessary to outline my understanding of what constitutes the prime objective of a social studies program.

The primary goal or objective of the social studies program, when it is referred to in this thesis, refers to the goal that is outlined in the Alberta program of studies for senior high social studies. In this document the primary or "ultimate" goal is defined as "Responsible citizenship"[7]. This goal is further elaborated on in the curriculum as it specifies that the development of "critical thinking" is central to this goal[8]. To clarify what is meant by the term "responsible citizenship" the curriculum specifies that a responsible citizen is one who is:

> "knowledgeable, purposeful and makes responsible choices. Responsible citizenship includes:
> - Understanding the role, rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democratic society and a citizen in the global community

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[6] Immanuel Kant. Philosophical Writings. 1782. Ed. Ernst Behler. (New York, NY: 1991.), pp. 264-265.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[8] *Ibid.*

- Participating constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions
- Respecting the dignity and worth of self and others[9]"

Throughout this thesis the primary goal or objectives of the Alberta program of studies will refer to the aforementioned definition.

This document also draws attention to many of the different knowledge objectives that constitute a large portion of the curriculum. These knowledge objectives form a portion of the curriculum along with skill and attitude objectives. The knowledge objectives that are identified in the program of studies are strongly influenced by "The knowledge of our community, the nature of a democratic society, an understanding of the nature of man, and an understanding of our changing social, political, technological and economic environments."[10] This thesis uses the above definition of knowledge objectives to critically examine and ascertain whether they conform to the primary goal of the program.

The knowledge objectives are further organized through a combination of "generalizations and key understandings, concepts and related facts.[11]" Through the division of the knowledge objectives into three different areas the curriculum is able to identify specific events and actions that are relevant to the larger generalizations and key understandings. This enables classroom instructors to obtain the necessary direction when attempting to teach the mandated curriculum.

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*

In answering the question of whether the knowledge objectives of the program of studies meets the intent and specified goal of the primary objective of the program it was also necessary to construct a phrase that could describe their relationship. To accomplish this, the term of phrase "paradoxical relationship" was used.

Within this phrase the word "paradox" is understood to refer to "An assertion that is essentially self-contradictory, though based on a valid deduction from acceptable premises.[12]" In applying this phrase to the Alberta program of studies the paradoxical relationships refer to knowledge objectives within the curriculum that are essentially assertions that contravene or contradict the primary goal of the program. It should be understood that within this term it is implicitly understood that the knowledge objectives are generally based on acceptable premises but through their exclusive wording often serve to contravene the intent or goal of the program. Through this action, their relationship to the primary goal can be described as paradoxical.

These three terms form the necessary core to navigate the ideas and reflections that are within this thesis. Through the exploration of the relationship between the primary goal and the knowledge objectives paradoxical relationships can be identified and possibly reconciled.

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[12] ITP Nelson. Canadian Dictionary of the English Language: An Encyclopedic Reference, *"Paradox"*, (Scarborough, Ontario, 1998) p. 993.

Research Methodology

"Historical writing must in some sense tell a story: it must contain narrative, a sense of movement through time."[13]

To help guide us through this daunting journey we find ourselves straining to hear the voice of one that can guide us and enable us to navigate through the timeless voices so that we may clearly understand the imperative paths they have laid before us. As I completed this project, the voice of Arthur Marwick has helped me understand the nature of our journey and has become our guide.

In attempting to ascertain whether the knowledge objectives of the Alberta Senior High Social Studies Program reflect the primary goal of the program, it is important to develop a comprehensive understanding of the primary goal. The primary goal has evolved into existence and continues to evolve today. This evolutionary state of this goal makes it necessary to examine the primary goal within a historical/philosophical context. Once a complex understanding of the primary goal has been developed, it is possible to apply this goal to the knowledge objectives in the program through a critical document analysis; only then may we discern whether the knowledge objectives are reflective of the primary goal.

Arthur Marwick's work serves to facilitate the adoption of a methodology conducive to this complicated task. Marwick's understanding of the notion of history states "There is truth in the notion of history as dialogue between present and past, in the notion that each age must reinterpret its own past; nonetheless with advances in technique, with advances in self-awareness, and with the powerful shoulders of our

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[13] Arthur Marwick, The Nature of History, 3rd ed. (London, 1993), p. 235.

illustrious predecessors bowed for us to stand on, there is also an absolute advance in the quality, the 'truthfulness' of history."[14]

This notion of history allows us to situate the study of the primary goal within a historical context. Since the primary goal continues to exist in an evolutionary state, it conforms to Marwick's understanding that the present state of the goal is informed by its past. Using Marwick's understanding also helps us conclude that this historical conception of the primary goal adds strength and quality providing an increased truthfulness to it.

Because the primary goal of the social studies program is situated within a historical context, it is necessary to define the way history is understood in this thesis. In this thesis, Marwick's definition of history is most useful. He defines history "as a process, linking past, present, and future, unfolding in response to certain imperatives, usually in a definite direction or series of stages, perhaps in a series of cycles."[15] This definition aids the development of an understanding of the primary goal as it takes into account its evolving nature. Since the primary goal of the social studies curriculum is informed by classical and modern philosophy I perceive the presence of a Hegelian dialectic process as an implicit characteristic of the program. The presence of an informed process that includes a wide range of philosophical thought, over a prolonged period of time, creates a rationale for the use of a historical study.

Because an unusual amount of philosophy impacts this topic and because there is a large span of time in which the philosophical evolution occurs, it is essential to

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

recognize that the exploration of the primary goal can be termed both a historical study and, more accurately, a metahistorical study[16]. The more concise term of metahistorical study is applicable due to the existence of the Hegelian process in the primary goal. Because the goal was not arbitrarily formed, it is important to recognize that it developed through a process where the present was routinely informed by the past. This occurred through a linear chronological and conceptual development of philosophical thought by which one can observe the formation of a thesis, antithesis, and finally a synthesis[17]. The extensive time frame during which this process has taken place also contributes to the necessity to describe this portion of the thesis methodology as a metahistorical study.

Because it has been the culmination of a long evolutionary process, the primary goal of the social studies program has also developed a story of its own. Because the goal itself contains a story, it is essential to utilize historical writing. Marwick helps us begin to understand why the existence of a story can provide a rationale for a historical study. As Marwick contends, "historical writing must in some sense *tell a story*: it must contain narrative, a sense of movement through time."[18].

The metahistorical study of the primary goal of social studies allows one to construct a framework for understanding the Alberta Senior High Social Studies program.

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[16] The term 'metahistorical' used here is derived from its use by such philosophers and historians as Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1899-1975), and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). The use of metahistorical analysis is in this study is due to the immense scope of the philosophy being examined in terms of the ideological differences and the evolution of the philosophical thought over a large time frame.

[17] Through the philosophies explored in the thesis the linear development of the philosophy can be observed. It is my belief that this informed development has led to advancements in the philosophy allowing it to culminate in the work of Charles Taylor and acknowledging the opportunity for the philosophy to advance further in the future.

[18] Marwick, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

This framework is then an opportunity to examine the specific knowledge objectives. This process can be described as a critical document analysis, where the understanding of the primary goal is utilized to discern whether the knowledge objectives of the program reflect that primary goal.

Critical analysis utilizes the basic underlying principles of the document to ascertain whether parity exists between the knowledge objectives and the primary goal. Using the primary goal of social studies in the document as a framework to examine the program, one can observe inconsistencies and identify how they may be reconciled. Through the process of critical analysis, it is hoped that inconsistencies or paradoxical relationships can be identified and possible solutions may become apparent. By critically examining the program through a comprehensive framework based on the primary goal of social studies, opportunities for an improved and grounded program become removed from the abstract to become concrete possibilities.

Ethics Review

"Discontent is the seed of ethics."[19]

With possibilities comes peril, and we are reminded that all paths have inherent dangers that must be considered prior to embarkation. This process of reflection can be seen as the moment where we ask what we "ought" to do – a moment of ethical reflection.

To examine – as an act upon – the Alberta Senior High School Social Studies Curriculum assumes that something in the program is absent or not working properly. This examination can be seen as an effort to ascertain how this assumption specifically manifests itself in the program of studies. This assumption also is an understanding that the ethical question is not whether the impact of the conclusions are ethical but rather whether it is ethical to continue to teach an inherently problematic curriculum.

The examination of the curriculum calls for the construction of a conceptual framework based on the primary goal of the program of studies and the philosophy underlying that goal leads one to engage moral reasons in the attempt to choose a "right" course of action. This thesis actively seeks to discover whether the knowledge objectives reflect the primary goal of the program, as it is understood through the philosophical roots. Should this study suggest that reflective disparity or paradoxical relationships exist, we must then face a moral and ethical responsibility to work towards change in the curriculum. This, given the critical nature of social studies, is a responsibility upon all teachers of the program.

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[19] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits. 1878, trans. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann. (Nebraska, USA: 1996.)

The primary goal explicitly emphasizes the development of individual capacity to become responsible and (implicitly) active citizens in a democratic society through the development of critical thinking skills[20]. Simply stated, it is important to ensure the knowledge objectives achieve this goal[21]. The balance of these two can be argued to be just on the basis of the principles of individual and social morality; however, paradoxical relationships imply a move away from the program's commitment to the development of student's capacities. Should this error be occurring, it is ethically incumbent upon social studies teachers and researchers to examine the curriculum and attempt to eliminate barriers to student development through the reconciliation of such paradoxical relationships.

The ethical principles necessary to apply when reflecting upon the questions of individual morality include John Stuart Mill's principle of utility, Kantian notions of respect for persons, and Aristotle's arguments regarding proper human excellences. The first two focus on the individual's obligation to others.

In the context of this thesis, John Stuart Mill's principle of utility would indicate that the existence of reflective disparity suggests that students are being denied an opportunity to actively and critically examine many topics and concepts in curriculum. This lack of opportunity limits their capacity to seek alternatives to existing systems that may increase the happiness of a given society. Through Kant's notion of respect for persons these reflective disparities can also be viewed as a lack of respect for individuals,

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[20] Although the primary goal does not explicitly place emphasis on the development of active citizens it does draw attention to this objective in describing "the nature and needs of a changing society" in the Program Rationale and Philosophy.

[21] Alberta Education, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

as the program of studies fails to acknowledge the capacity of students and merely treats students as a means to an ends. This lack of respect for individuals is apparent in paradoxical relations between knowledge objectives and the primary goal of the program as they bar students from questioning the validity of certain knowledge objectives, thereby subjecting them to forms of paternalistic tutelage rather than developing their capacities to use their own reason to form educated conclusions.

Aristotle's arguments regarding proper human excellences also contribute to the formation of ethical justifications based on individual morality. Aristotle focuses on the idea that the human being's natural purpose is happiness, and the development of one's proper use of reason is essential to this end[22]. Aristotle believed that, for individuals to reach full potential, they had to exercise their reason. From this perspective, he would perceive paradoxical relationships in the program of studies that limit the individual's capacity to exercise reason and thus restrict individual development.

The ethical implications and motivations that make it incumbent upon teachers and researchers to engage in this research also move beyond individual moral considerations to include principles of social morality. These considerations derive from the understanding that humans act collectively as well as individually, and the existence of paradoxical relationships has both societal and individual implications.

The possible societal implications of paradoxical relationships create numerous ethical considerations as well as powerful motivations for research. Because Alberta

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[22] This emphasis on the development of one's proper use of reason can also be seen in the curriculum as it draws attention to the importance of student development in relation to skills that are necessary for learning (page 1 of the program of studies).

Learning, a branch of the provincial government, mandates the program of studies, serious implications can be drawn from the existence of paradoxical relationships. As Jeffery Olen and Vincent Barry note, "Governments, even democratic governments like our own, are inherently coercive."[23] The coercive nature of government must always remain under the most serious scrutiny in relation to education to ensure that individual interests are balanced with the government's interests. To achieve this balance, we must be observant of the principles of paternalism and freedom. We must ask whether the existence of paradoxical relationships create paternalistic relationships between the state and the students. The imbalance caused by paternalism can result in a detached state where citizens are denied the opportunity to develop the necessary abilities to actively participate in a democratic state. This restriction upon society is unethical, and we must be ever vigilant in trying to avoid such restrictions. To maintain our ability to actively and critically participate in our own democratic governance, we must constantly engage in the critical examination of curriculum to ensure that intentional or unintentional paradoxical relationships are identified and reconciled.

The second principle related to social morality we must consider is the principle of pluralism and freedom. This principle is especially applicable in Canada because Canada is one of the greatest examples of a pluralistic society today. For example, Canadians experience numerous independent centres of power (family, the press, religions, business) that are generally allowed to seek their own ends without interference. This interference comes in the form of government, which is the most powerful

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[23] Barry Olen and Vincent Barry, Applying Ethics 4th ed. (Belmont, California: 1992.) p. 14.

institution in Canada, although for the purposes of this thesis only the provincial government will be discussed[24].

The existence of multiple independent power centres acts as barriers to government restrictions on individual freedom[25]. Because the government of Alberta mandates the social studies program, we must constantly reflect upon the content to discern whether the program acts as a tool of the state that places the interests of the government above those of the individual students. The possible existence of disparity between the knowledge objectives and the primary goal may indicate that this relationship has evolved with education becoming an agent of the state rather than an independent institution which provides an unbiased program directed towards the development of an individual capable of critical thought. It is the possible existence of relationships such as these that provide the ethical motivation to engage in this research.

Unlike other forms of research, the ethical ramifications lie not in the results but rather this research acts as a response to the ethical questions. To attempt to discover whether the knowledge objectives reflect the primary goal is an attempt to answer many of the questions raised here. Through the acknowledgment of the possible unethical relationships derived from reflective disparity in the program of studies, we move ahead knowing that our resolve has become stronger, our path clearer. We understand that our actions answer our own questions as well as respond to the ethical questions.

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[24] The term "interference" is used in reference to government as the government, in relation to the content of this thesis, is understood to act in either its own interest or in favour of a specific group. In order to enable students to develop the capacity to critically examine topics they must be able to be free from biases that favour one group over another in the curriculum.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Literature Review

"For books are not altogether dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are."[26]

The critical analysis of the social studies curriculum and the construction of a foundation by which to understand it entails a journey into past literature through which we can gain insights into the knowledge that has come before us. Since the subject matter of this thesis touches on so many topics and creates a need to clarify such terms as responsible citizenship, we must examine those works that have influenced our understandings.

To begin to understand the primary goal of the social studies program, one must examine the concept of responsible citizenship within the senior high social studies curriculum and those issues related to the achievement of responsible citizenship through the teaching of the current curriculum. This task includes addressing key concepts in relation to various subdivided themes.

In exploring the concept of responsible citizenship in Alberta senior high social studies curriculum, it is necessary to divide the topic into several different frameworks. These frameworks include the study of current curriculum, philosophical foundations of curriculum, education criticisms, democracy/nation-state, the practical teaching of social studies, and metaphor construction. These themes vary from the specific analysis of a certain area (the study of current curriculum) to the examination of very broad topics (democracy/nation-state).

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[26] John Milton, "*Areopagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*" (London, 1644)

In attempting to answer the question of how the knowledge objectives of the curriculum reflect the primary goal it is important to understand the various theoretical frameworks that impact upon it. At the centre of the primary goal of social studies lies the concept of responsible citizenship. To answer the aforementioned question, it is essential to explore the various frameworks that inform the understanding of responsible citizenship as put forth in the Alberta program of studies.

The Study of Current Curriculum

The current curriculum content of the Senior High School Social Studies Program (SS 10, 20, 30) is mandated by Alberta Learning[27]. In a document set out by Alberta Education in 1991 the primary goal is clear:

> Responsible citizenship is the ultimate goal of social studies. Basic to this goal is the development of critical thinking. The "responsible citizen" is one who is knowledgeable, purposeful and makes responsible choices. Responsible citizenship includes:
> - Understanding the role, rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democratic society and a citizen in the global community
> - Participating constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions
> - Respecting the dignity and worth of self and others[28]

These objectives illustrate that the intent of the social studies program to provide students with the necessary skills to become participating members of a democratic society and global community. This objective is further clarified or restricted by a commitment to

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[27] Alberta Learning is the provincial government department responsible for the delivery of education programs and services. In 1999 the name of the department was changed from Alberta Education to Alberta Learning.

[28] Alberta Learning, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

treating students as "self-motivated, self-directed problem solvers and decision makers who are developing the skills necessary for learning."[29]

The remainder of the document that is pertinent for this thesis includes the knowledge objectives. These knowledge objectives are essential to ascertaining whether the curriculum content reflects the primary goal of the social studies curriculum. The development of this understanding facilitates the identification of paradoxical relationships that exist between the primary goal of the social studies program and the knowledge objectives.

In examining the current curriculum, it was necessary to find out whether various textbooks used in conjunction with the curriculum reflected paradoxical relationships in the curriculum. These textbooks included Canada's Century[30], Contact Canada[31], Canada Today[32], Canada: A New Geography[33], and Canada: A Nation Unfolding[34]. These texts covered a variety of concepts that were all a part of the curriculum; however, they often failed to enable students to critically examine topics. As a result, they reinforced the same paradoxical relationships that existed in the curriculum. These texts were valuable in identifying that the paradoxical relationships in the curriculum manifest themselves in the material that teachers are supposed to employ when teaching students.

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[30] Allan Evans, and I. Martinello. Canada's Century. 2nd ed. (Toronto, Ontario: 1988.)

[31] Fraser Cartwright and Gary Pierce. Contact Canada. (Toronto, Ontario: 1988.)

[32] Angus L. Scully, Carl F. Smith, and Daniel J. McDevitt. Canada Today. 2nd ed., (Scarborough, Ontario: 1988.)

[33] Ralph R. Krueger and Raymond G. Corder. Canada: A New Geography (Revised). (Toronto, Ontario: 1974.)

[34] Diane Eaton, and Garfield Newman. Canada: A Nation Unfolding. (Toronto, Ontario: 1994.)

In attempting to understand the curriculum it was important to explore the question of "are the objectives as set out in the Alberta Education document sufficient?" An answer to this question was provided by Wesley and Wronski who identified that "True objectives must be general, idealistic, largely abstract, and to a considerable degree unattainable."[35] The authors also argued "Any worthwhile social studies program is designed to enable the student to gain certain basic *understandings*, acquire necessary *skills*, and develop *attitudes* that are needed for effective citizenship in a democratic society."[36] The concept of objectives put forth by these authors helped to clarify the understanding that the primary goal of the Alberta program of studies conformed to popular notions of what they should be.

In looking at the state of the Alberta curriculum, I considered revisions that were currently under review for the social studies curriculum. I wanted to know if the current discourse about curriculum change included changes concerning possible paradoxical relationships. To accomplish this I again utilized a 1999 Alberta Learning document[37]. This document outlined proposed changes to the Alberta Social Studies Curriculum and recounted Alberta Learning's response to those changes. Although illustrating the government's acknowledgement of the need for curricular change, it did not address the paradoxical relationships that currently exist in the curriculum.

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[35] Edgar B. Wesley and Stanley P. Wronski. Teaching Social Studies in High School. 4th ed. (Boston, USA: 1958.) p. 71.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[37] Alberta Learning. "*Alberta Response to the Draft Foundation Document for the Development of the Western Canadian Protocol Social Studies K-12 Common Curriculum Framework*". (Edmonton, Alberta: November, 1999.)

I also incorporated an online document published by McGraw-Hill Ryerson.[38] This document outlined the initial development of the social studies curriculum in Canada and explained its development. Having read the document, I began to understand that the social studies curriculum content was originally constructed to meet nationalistic goals that were socially and politically motivated. I began to see the curriculum as a fluctuating document, responsive to societal and political needs or interests.

To contribute to my understanding I utilized Alan Sears and Andrew Hughes[39]. These authors supported the conception of curriculum as a means by which education could and should contribute to the creation of responsible citizens who can actively participate in a democratic society. They conclude by arguing that a common perception exists in Canada that this objective is not being met due to deficiencies in the curriculum. This argument reaffirms the need to examine whether the conduct of curriculum is reflective of the objectives and why.

In developing a framework for the study of current curriculum it is possible to construct an understanding of the structure of current curriculum and related materials, develop an awareness of current discourses on curriculum and how they can contribute to the questioning of the sufficiency of curriculum objectives, and create a critical understanding of possible revisions and the motivations behind them.

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[38] McGraw-Hill Ryerson. "*Company History*", McGraw-Hill Ryerson, On-line. Available: http://www.mghr.com/coinfo/about/comphis.html, (1998.)

[39] Alan M. Sears and Andrew S. Hughes. *"Citizenship Education and Current Educational Reform"*. Canadian Journal of Education. Vol. 21, (1996.)

The Philosophical Foundations of Curriculum

In developing my thesis it was imperative to have a solid understanding of the roots of the primary goal in the social studies curriculum, as it is the central means to gauge whether the curriculum content is reflective of the objectives. To accomplish this task it was necessary to search through primary philosophical and political sources that predated the French Revolution through to modern times. At the core of this research is Immanuel Kant[40].

Kant's ideas form one of the basic underlying principles of education. These principles can be understood in terms of Kant's perception that the individual exists in a state of "self-incurred tutelage" and the only means to break away from this state is through enlightenment[41]. With this understanding Kant alludes to the idea that for individuals to break away from this state they need to exist within a free-thinking (autonomous) environment where they are allowed freedom of thought and expression. Once an individual is allowed to exercise his or her own reason Kant believed they would be able to become contributing members of a democratic society. This understanding begins to enable one to understand one of the basic foundations upon which a few of the existing objectives of the curriculum are based.

From this point I integrated the work of Voltaire[42] and John Stuart Mill[43]. These two authors argued for similar rights although the writings of Mill provide a much more

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[40] Immanuel Kant. Philosophical Writings. 1782. Ed. Ernst Behler. (New York, NY: 1991.)

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[42] François Marie Arouet De Voltaire. Candide, Zadig, and Selected Stories. 1759. Trans. Donald M Frame. (Toronto, Ontario: 1981.)

[43] John S. Mill. "*On Liberty*" and "*The Subjection of Women*". 1859. (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: 1996.)

concise articulation of the argument. These works served to refine the work of Kant within the utilitarian tradition and further explain the current curriculum objectives and how they work towards the development of responsible citizens through the practice of critical thought. Mill argued that "We have now recognized the necessity to the mental well-being of mankind (on which all other well being depends) of freedom of opinion, and freedom of the expression of opinion."[44] This argument is an expansion of Kant's as Mill also provides four grounds upon which he bases this argument. These include:

> First, if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility.
>
> Secondly, though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.
>
> Thirdly, even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth; unless it is suffered to be, and actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds. And not only this, but, fourthly, the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled, and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good, but cumbering the ground, and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience[45].

These four grounds enable a clearer understanding of how curricular content should be presented to students to facilitate the achievement of responsible citizenship and critical thought. Mill's work helps to illustrate how curriculum content should be

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[44] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

presented to students as well as providing a rationale for each. This insight provides valuable means to understand the objectives of the curriculum as well as providing a means to evaluate the curriculum content. In developing my understandings of both Mill and Kant I also referred to the work of Strike and Soltis[46]. Strike and Soltis (1992) discussed Mill's concept of a "free marketplace of ideas" and the importance of it in the development of critical thinking skills[47].

In exploring modern philosophical influences on the objectives I incorporated the work of Charles Taylor[48]. Taylor, in his essay "The Politics of Recognition," integrated the work of Kant in providing an understanding of how education should serve to enable individuals to move away from "inauthentic judgements" regarding the equal value of other cultures and enable them to be open to "comparative cultural study"[49]. This argument by Taylor helps to provide an understanding of the direction of the curriculum objectives by illustrating how the curriculum should guard against the presentation of material that leads students to make inauthentic judgments that lack critical thought. These three authors comprise the core of this theme.

To compliment this area of my research and support the arguments of the aforementioned authors I have also utilized many other works that I can categorize as primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included the works of Francis

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[46] Kenneth A. Strike and Jonas F. Soltis. The Ethics of Teaching. (New York, NY: 1992.)

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[48] Charles Taylor. "*Multiculturalism and The Politics of Recognition*". (Princeton, New Jersey: 1992.)

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Bacon[50], René Descartes[51], John Dewey[52], Michel Foucault[53], Henry David Thoreau[54], Plato[55], Aristotle[56], and Jean-Jacques Rousseau[57]. For secondary sources I utilized the works of Isaiah Berlin[58], Carl Cone[59], Louis Bredvold, Francis Canavan, & J. S. Hoffman[60], Peter Schouls[61], Thomas Pangle[62], and C. P. Courtney[63].

Additional secondary sources, which have impacted upon this theme, include the work of Thomas Popkewitz[64] and Thomas Hunt and Jim Garrison[65]. Popkewitz's believes

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[50] Francis Bacon. Essays. 1597. Ed. Tom Griffith. (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: 1997.)

[51] René Descartes. Key Philosophical Writings. 1647. Trans. Elizabeth Haldane. Ed. Enrique Chávez-Arvizo. (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: 1997.)

[52] John Dewey. Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. (New York, NY: 1916.)

[53] Michel Foucault. The History of Sexuality. Trans. Robert Hurley. (New York, NY: 1970.)

[54] Henry David Thoreau. Walden and On the Duty of Civil Disobedience. 1854. (New York, NY: 1965.)

[55] Plato. Republic. 420 B.C.?. Trans. John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan. (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: 1997.)

[56] Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics. 357 B.C.?. Trans. Harris Rackham. (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: 1996.)

[57] Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Social Contract. 1762. Trans. Maurice Cranston. (London, England: 1968.)

[58] Isaiah Berlin. "*Two Concepts of Liberty*". Inaugural Lecture, (University of Oxford, 1958.)

[59] Carl B. Cone. Burke and the Nature of Politics: The Age of the French Revolution. (Kentucky, USA: 1964.)

[60] Louis I. Bredvold, Francis Canavan, S. J. Ross, J. S. Hoffman, C. P. Ives, Russell Kirk, and Peter J. Stanlis. The Relevance of Edmund Burke. Ed. Peter J. Stanlis. (New York, NY: 1964.)

[61] Peter A. Schouls. Reasoned Freedom: John Locke and Enlightenment. (New York, NY: 1992.)

[62] Thomas L. Pangle. Montesquieu's Philosophy of Liberalism: A Commentary on The Spirit of the Laws. 1973. (Chicago, USA: 1989.)

[63] C. P. Courtney. Montesquieu and Burke. Ed. J. Boyd, J. Seznec, P. E. Russell. (Oxford, Great Britain: 1963.)

[64] Thomas S. Popkewitz. *"Knowledge, Power, and Curriculum: Revisiting a TRSE Argument"*. Theory and Research in Education. Vol. 26, (1998.)

that political rationalities are brought into individual rules for action and participation using a Foucaultian perspective, which illustrates how power is concerned with how knowledge disciplines and produces action. Popkewitz helps to clarify the roots of action and participation within the Alberta Curriculum. Hunt and Garrison historically examine the paradoxes of liberal modernity. They do this by looking at paradoxes and tensions that existed in the enlightenment philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. Although this article may be criticized for its American bias one would be remiss to not note the influence this philosophy has had on the Canadian conceptions of what a liberal democracy is. As the current curriculum emphasizes that Canadian society is working towards a liberal democracy, the understanding of the paradoxes of freedom and indoctrination that exist within the concept of liberal democracy is important.

This theme has developed as an exploration of the foundations of the curriculum. In exploring the foundations of curriculum, the various sources have provided an understanding of the linear development of the curriculum objectives. The sources have also provided a detailed analysis of how the thought regarding the development of citizenship education and the importance of critical thought progressed over time as each source served to either explain or elaborate upon the preceding one. The combination of the various sources and their seemingly Hegelian development has provided validity to the various writings and enabled a very clear and objective view as to a philosophical intent of the social studies curriculum, that of the achievement of responsible citizenship through critical thought.

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[65] Thomas C. Hunt, and Jim Garrison. *"Thomas Jefferson on Freedom of Religion and Inquiry: The Paradoxes of Liberal Modernity"*. Review Journal of Philosophy & Social Science. Vol. 21, (1996)

Educational Criticisms

The literature in this area is divided into two different groupings. The first group includes articles and books that are critical of education but not necessarily education in Canada. The second grouping includes articles that are critical of Canadian social studies education. Both groupings are beneficial as their different foci enable me to enlarge their perspective regarding the possible criticisms of education.

Much of the literature regarding educational criticisms can be categorized as being critical of education within a global context while not citing any specific educational system. These criticisms can be further divided into three subcategories. The first subcategory includes criticisms of the effectiveness of existing educational systems in addressing the developmental needs of students (Kieran Egan[66] and Daniel Tröhler[67]). The second subcategory of criticisms includes arguments regarding educational systems that adhere to the concept of students as receptors rather than participants (Paulo Freire[68] and Bourne & Eisenburg[69]). The last subcategory of criticisms includes arguments regarding the ineffectiveness of educational institutions in educating students to become active participants within a democratic society (Joseph Farrell[70], Benjamin Levin[71], David

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[66] Kieran Egan. The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape our Understanding. (Chicago, IL: 1997.)

[67] Daniel Tröhler. "*The Global Community, Religion, and Education: The Modernity of Dewey's Social Philosophy*" Studies in Philosophy and Education. Vol. 19. (Netherlands: 2000.)

[68] Paulo Freire. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra Bergman-Ramos. (New York, NY: 1970.)

[69] Paula Bourne and John Eisenberg. Curriculum Issues in the Curriculum: Theory, Practice, and Evaluation. Curriculum Series 34. (Toronto, Ontario: 1978.)

[70] Joseph P. Farrell. "*Democracy and Education: Who Gets to Speak and Who is Listened to?*". Curriculum Inquiry. (Massachusetts, USA: 1998.)

[71] Benjamin Levin. "*The Educational Requirement for Democracy*" Curriculum Inquiry. Vol. 28:1. (Massachusetts, USA: 1998.)

Hursh & Aggie Seneway[72], John Dayton[73], and Jürgen Oelkers[74]). This subcategory is important in identifying how the content of curriculum does not meet the objectives of the curriculum.

These articles do not deal specifically with the Canadian educational system and therefore facilitate some interpretation to identify their relevance to the Alberta social studies curriculum. The core articles that I am utilizing from these are those by Farrell, Levin and Freire. Levin and Farrell both support the underlying assumptions in my thesis as they advocate a greater emphasis on allowing students freedom of thought and encouraging them to build greater critical thinking skills so that they can better contribute to a democratic society. These educators are further supported by the arguments of Dayton and Hursh & Seneway who argue that schools fail to educate students about democracy, as it does not engage them in any participatory democratic process.

The article by Freire is valuable due to its neo-Marxist review of education and its identification of education in capitalist countries as being oppressive. Freire goes on to identify how education treats students as objects rather than subjects by utilizing a "banking system" by which teachers constantly deposit information without ever learning

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[72] David Hursh, and Aggie Seneway. *"Living, Not Practicing, Democracy at School"*. Theory and Research in Social Education. Vol. 26, (1998.)

[73] John Dayton. *"Democracy, Public Schools, and the Politics of Education"*. Review Journal of Philosophy & Social Science. Vol. 20, (1995.)

[74] Oelkers, Jürgen. "*Democracy and Education: About the Future of a Problem*". Studies in Philosophy and Education. Vol. 19, (2000.)

from the knowledge that students already have[75]. Through his argument Freire provides a rationale for making changes to the existing systems of education.

The second grouping of articles includes criticisms that relate to teaching of history in Canadian schools. These articles examine the demise of history education in Canada and argue that there is an essential role for history in attempting to liberate the individual (Penney Clark[76], Ken Osborne[77]). Another article that examines the historical roots of social studies and uses those roots to criticize its current state is by Robert Brady and James Barth[78]. These educators look at what social studies curriculum began as and, assuming that to be the ideal, they contrast it to the current state and argue for change. Articles by Wayne Gorman[79] and Graham Reynolds[80] examine how the curriculum adopts a mainstream view in its content and structure and how this characteristic can lead to the alienation of specific groups within Canada.

Each of these criticisms is beneficial as it provides an insight into the structure of the existing educational system and they enabled me to see beyond the curriculum itself

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[75] Freire, *op. cit.*, pp.58-59.

[76] Penney Clark. *"Heroes and Canadian History"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 34, (1999.) and *"A Conversation About History Teaching"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 34, (2000.)

[77] Ken Osborne. *"Catalyst or Caterpillar? On the State of History in Canada"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 34, (2000.)

[78] Robert H. Brady and James L. Barth. *Reclaiming the Spirit of the Social Studies"*. Social Education. Vol. 59, (1995.)

[79] Wayne Gorman. *"Canadian Native Students and Inequitable Learning"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 33, (1999.)

[80] Graham Reynolds. *"Teaching First Nations History as Canadian History"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 34, (2000.)

and understand the far reaching implications that a curriculum may have on a given population or society in general.

Democracy/Nation-State

The theme of democracy/nation-state has emerged from the theme of educational criticisms adding a new component to my research. In examining this new component I found that it broadened the rationale for the re-examination of curriculum and validated arguments put forth in the thesis. This theme is also tied into the foundations of the curriculum as it helped to clarify some of the ideas put forth by Immanuel Kant, especially clarifying the distinction between the public and private realms of society.

The initial authors that I included were Jügen Habermas[81], Gianni Vattimo[82], and Bill Readings[83]. Habermas examined three different views of democracy and contrasted those views in terms of their differing perspectives on state and society. Within this examination, Habermas helped clarify Kant's public/private distinction. This added credibility to the relevance of Kant's work in the structure of modern democracies. Vattimo examined the nature of society from a post-modern perspective utilizing many of the same philosophical views discussed earlier. Vattimo added clarity to the primary sources that I utilized and provided a modern critique of our current society that is necessary to evaluate the curriculum's role in our society. Readings examined what he perceived to be the decline of the nation-state, which integrated the impact of multi-national corporations into a definition of the nation-state. This provided a more dynamic

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[81] Jügen Habermas. "*Three Normative Models of Democracy*". Constellations. Vol. 1, no. 1. (Cambridge, Great Britain: 1998.)

[82] Gianni Vattimo. The Transparent Society. Trans. David Webb. (Baltimore, USA: 1992.)

definition of the nation-state for my research and insured that my discussions of a democratic nation remained current and involved multiple aspects of the nation-state.

To understand the existing theories of development I referred to Richard Peet & Elaine Hartwick[84]. These theorists provided a strong analysis and critique of the various forms of economic development culminating in the avocation of a democratic theory of development. This reaffirmed my belief that the economic development of a nation directly affects the educational system and that certain economic development theories act as oppressive forces upon the individual as they advocate the continuation of the status quo (neo-liberalism).

To explore the notion of a democratic theory of development further I utilized Arthur MacEwan[85]. This author provided a strong critique of neo-liberal development using the assumptions of neo-liberalism as a means of criticism. MacEwan argued for the alteration of the current neo-liberal system into a democratic development system. He argued that, through the introduction of a more liberated curriculum that did not the echo the current neo-liberal assumptions of economic growth, we can obtain a democratic form of economic development. This argument enabled me to further my understanding of how the economic system as well as the role of the state affected the development of the curriculum and how changes to the curriculum would have to take shape.

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[83] Bill Readings. The University in Ruins. (Massachusetts, USA: 1996.)

[84] Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick. Theories of Development. (New York, NY: 1999.)

[85] Arthur MacEwan. Neo-Liberalism or Democracy?: Economic Strategy, Markets, and Alternatives for the 21st Century. (Halifax, Nova Scotia: 1999.)

To further explore this topic I examined numerous other sources (Larry Diamond[86], James Youniss[87], Roberta Sigel & Marilyn Hoskins[88], Bob Edwards & Michael Foley[89], Noel McGinn[90], and Henry Giroux & Peter McLaren[91]) that provided some insight into this theme. These sources helped clarify and expand many of the ideas and arguments put forth by Peet & Hartwick and MacEwan.

This theme has been and will continue to be of high quality as the body of literature is vast. The various books and articles provided me with a clearer understanding of what a democracy and nation-state are and, through that understanding, I am better able to understand the impact of them upon the curriculum. This is a significant area of my research that due to its size I must limit to remain focused on the initial intent of my thesis.

The Practical Teaching of Social Studies

This theme is distinctly different from the others as it deals with the actual practice of teaching social studies in the classroom. This is important to my research, as there is a need to link the theory component of my thesis to the actual practice of teaching

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[86] Larry Diamond. *"Cultivating democratic citizenship: education for a new century of democracy in the Americas"*. Social Studies, Vol. 88, (1997.)

[87] James Youniss. *"What we know about engendering civic identity"*. American Behavioral Scientist. Vol. 40, (1997.)

[88] Roberta Sigel (Ed.) and Marilyn Hoskins (Ed.). Education for Democratic Citizenship: a challenge for muti-ethnic societies. (New York, NY: 1991.)

[89] Bob Edwards (Ed.) and Michael Foley (Ed.). *"Social Capital, Civil Society and Contemporary democracy"* American Behavioural Scientist. Vol. 40, (1997.)

[90] Noel McGinn. *"Education, Democratization, and Globalization: a challenge for comparative education"*. Comparative Education Review. Vol. 40, (1996.)

[91] Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. *"Teacher Education and the Politics of engagement: the case for democratic schooling"*. Harvard Educational Review. Vol. 56, (1986.)

social studies. The vast majority of literature that is available on Alberta social studies education falls within this category as it focuses on how social studies curriculum is currently being taught in Canadian schools or new ideas for teaching the existing social studies curriculum. The authors that I am currently using under this theme include Norman Gustafson[92], Phillip Jackson[93], Kieran Egan[94], Dwayne Olsen[95], William Wilen & John Phillips[96], Ian Wright[97], and George Tompkins[98]. These authors have helped me understand how students best learn about different forms of information as well as how to best convey the existing content of social studies curriculum.

This theme in my research has been beneficial to my overall thesis. The different authors were helpful as they identified that current educational thought was focused on teaching approaches that sought to accommodate for deficiencies in the current curriculum but they did not advocate changing the curriculum. This helped to justify further research as it illustrated how current thought doesn't address the root problems of curriculum but rather approaches the problems with "band-aid" solutions.

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[92] Norman Gustafson. "*Content Analysis in the History Class*". The Journal of Canadian Social Studies. (January/February 1998.)

[93] Phillip Jackson. Life in the Classrooms. (New York, NY: 1968.)

[94] Kieran Egan. The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape our Understanding. (Chicago, IL: 1997.) and Romantic Understanding. (Chicago, IL: 1990.)

[95] Dwayne G. Olsen, *"'Less' can be 'More' in the Promotion of Thinking"*. Social Education. Vol. 59, (1995.)

[96] William W. Wilen and John Arul Phillips. *"Teaching Critical Thinking: A Metacognitive Approach"*. Social Education. Vol. 59, (1995.)

[97] Ian Wright. *"Making Critical Thinking Possible: Options for Teachers"*. Social Education. Vol. 59, (1995.)

Metaphor Construction

In the construction of my thesis I found that writing metaphorically provided a means to tie my research together and make the content more accessible for the layman reader. To accomplish this I searched for metaphors that would encompass the whole of my thesis and the current state of the social studies curriculum in Alberta.

To find an all-encompassing metaphor I spent a great deal of time reading through various books that were usually insufficient in aiding my search. As I moved through the literature I found that the search involved a study of film, classical literature, and some modern literature as well as religious works. One of the most important of these was by Jostien Gaarder[99] who, through the story of a girl who engages in a journey of investigative discovery, provides an excellent overview of the history of philosophical thought. In attempting to find a metaphor for the current state of the curriculum I looked towards various religious works and, using The Holy Bible: New International Version[100] (?/1986), found the metaphor I was looking for. This metaphor characterized the current curriculum as a house that was build upon shifting sands thereby lacking any proper foundations.

This portion of my research is now complete and I strongly believe that has been one of the most important endeavours of my research and has provided me with the means by which I can tie my thesis together. This area has also enabled me to transform my writing into a much more coherent form which has aided in the clarity of my thesis.

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[98] George S. Tompkins. A Common Countenance. (Scarborough, Ontario: 1986.)
[99] Jostein Gaarder. Sophie's World. (New York, NY: 1996.)

[100] The Holy Bible: New International Version. (Nashville, Tennessee: 1986.)

Directions for Future Research

In the preceding sections many of the primary and secondary research materials have been examined and discussed in terms of their effects on my theoretical framework. These materials all provide an insight into the question of whether the paradoxical relationships in the Alberta social studies curriculum create barriers to the achievement of the objectives. Much of the literature also explores possible directions for the future of education, directions that would facilitate the liberation of the curriculum to facilitate individual enlightenment. Each author, in some way, compliments the assumption that responsible citizenship and critical thought can only stem from a liberated curriculum.

The research has enabled me to focus my understandings of the Alberta social studies curriculum and the various influences that act upon the curriculum. The research has also provided justification for my research as it has identified that much of the existing writings that are available do not address the specific curriculum issues and they fail to ground their views on curriculum in the philosophical roots where it developed. This failing is where I believe onus for true curriculum change lies; therefore, I believe that the research I am engaged in is justified and will be beneficial in providing a new direction for the future of senior high social studies curriculum in Alberta.

Immanuel Kant

"Sapere aude! 'Have the courage to use your own reason!' —that is the motto of enlightenment."[101]

As we walk through the endless hallway, perhaps Immanuel Kant's voice is most prominent and sets the stage for those to come. Born in Königsberg, Prussia, he was both a philosopher and professor who wrote extensively in the areas of ethics and morality. In one of his political writings titled "What is Enlightenment?", he wrote on the status of the individual. In this essay Kant discussed how the individual comes to exist in a state of oppression and how the individual may work to release themselves from this oppression to become liberated or enlightened. This portion of the paper will briefly review the ideas that Kant put forth in this essay.

Kant discusses the oppression of the individual in terms of a "self incurred tutelage" and refers to the release from this tutelage as enlightenment[102]. To unravel Kant's ideas of enlightenment one must first clearly understand what Kant was referring to with "self-incurred tutelage". Kant defined it as follows:

> Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is the tutelage when it's cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another.[103]

Through this powerful claim Kant aggressively sets the tone for the remainder of the essay. Kant emphasizes the individual's need to move away from the tutelage of others.

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[101] Immanuel Kant. Philosophical Writings. 1782. Ed. Ernst Behler. (New York, NY: 1991.) p. 263.

[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 263-269.

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

He also identifies the "self-incurred" nature of the tutelage, which he identifies as coming from the individual's lack of ability and "courage" to use their own reason without direction from others[104]. It is the individual's inability to make informed decisions without external influences that one can infer that Kant advocates the idea that the path to enlightenment lies within every individual and revolves around their ability to use their own reason.

Kant also describes this tutelage as "lifelong" in that the individual is never truly allowed to exercise their reason as an adult[105]. He believes that the governing groups of the time would assume "superintendence" over them before they became autonomous adults[106]. Although Kant referred to the governing groups of the time as those of the church (which had a far greater political role then compared to today), we can attribute many of the same characteristics to the governments and institutions of today.

Kant understood that, because the "self-incurred tutelage" was "lifelong," the individual could not instantly move away from it. Kant saw that many individuals who may attempt to use their reason would experience failure and choose not to attempt again[107]. He understood that, for individuals to remove themselves from the tutelage, they would have to experience a form of rebirth by which they could slowly learn to walk again using their own reason. Using the rebirth analogy the individual would, over time and with failures, learn to harness their reason thus releasing them from their dependency.

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[104] *Loc. cit.*

[105] *Ibid.*

[106] *Ibid.*

[107] *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264.

Kant also recognized that during the slow growth of the individual's reason there must be restrictions on freedom. Although the idea of restrictions seems to contravene the concept of enlightenment Kant believed it could be a means to protect and promote enlightenment. He divided restrictions into two categories, those that were obstacles to enlightenment and those that were promoters of it. Kant eloquently defined each as follows:

> The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be very narrowly restricted without particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment. By the public use of one's reason [*sic*] I understand the use [*sic*] which a person makes of it as a scholar before the reading public. Private use I call that which one may make of it in a particular civil post or office which is entrusted to him.[108]

Kant's division of public and private use of one's reason enables us to recognize how certain restrictions can promote enlightenment. Kant states that the public use of reason must always remain free and this type of use must take place before the general public, for instance, within an academic context. For Kant, the public use of reason may be infringed upon thus making any restriction upon it an unbearable obstacle to enlightenment. Kant also discussed the private use of reason, which he defined as a use that may be infringed upon to facilitate the duties of an individual within a public office. This private use of reason would apply to individuals who work in government services such as the Postal Service. These individuals are performing duties in a public office for the benefit of the general public. These individuals are justified to express their disapproval of postal practices as a scholar in the presence of the general public however if that same worker stopped doing their job as an expression of their disapproval there

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[108] *Ibid*,, p. 265.

could possibly be disastrous effects on others. Since the latter actions of the postal worker could have damaging implications for the general public, it is justifiable to place restrictions upon that individual. As illustrated in the case above, Kant believed these forms of restriction promoted the individual's enlightenment as they marginally restrict the individual's actions to protect others while still allowing the individual the freedom to use their own reason.

Throughout this essay, Kant spends a great deal of time reflecting on the enlightenment of the individual, but he also comments on the role of government within the process. This role, although noted to a lesser degree, is essential in understanding the process by which Kant proposes the individual become enlightened. Kant, who lived during the age of absolute monarchs, believed that the enlightenment of the individual entailed a minimal amount of restrictions. With these restrictions in mind, Kant knew that the role of government would need to be redefined. Kant saw this reform as being a "head of state who favours…enlightenment…allowing his subjects to make public use of their reason and to publish their thoughts on the better formulation of his legislation and even their open-minded criticisms of the laws already made."[109]

From this statement we can conclude that Kant advocated a restructuring of government rather than the dismantling of the existing system. He favoured this approach as he saw the role of government as pivotal to the enlightenment of the individual. Kant viewed the government as a means to protect the enlightenment of the individual as it could impose certain restrictions as a means to protect the interests of its citizens. Kant

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[109] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

saw the need for reform in government in its need to become responsible to the people thereby being receptive to the criticisms of its citizens. Kant believed that, by being open to criticism, a monarch could "(unite) the general public will in his own."[110] In the unification of wills a monarch or government can move away from the superintendence of individuals towards a protective role.

This protective role the government moves away from making decisions for the individual and moves towards protecting and encouraging the individual to use their own reason. The government acts as a protector by preventing individuals from adversely harming others through their actions. By this action the government protects the individual's right to the public expression of one's reason while "narrowly" restricting the private use of reason in order to protect the individual from the harmful actions of others[111]. This protective and encouraging role of the government in the enlightenment of the individual gives the government a pivotal role in the process of enlightenment.

Throughout his essay, Kant provides a well-developed concept of what enlightenment is and provides a brief description of how the individual can obtain enlightenment. Reflecting upon the ideas he put forth Kant made a paradoxical observation regarding his conclusions. Kant described his observation as follows:

> A greater degree of civil freedom appears advantageous to the freedom of the mind of the people, and yet it places inescapable limitations upon it; a lower degree of civil freedom, on the contrary, provides the mind with room for each man to extend himself to his full capacity. As nature has uncovered from under this hard shell the seed for which she most tenderly cares — the propensity and vocation to free thinking — this gradually works back upon the character of the people, who thereby gradually become capable of managing freedom; finally, it affects the principles of government, which

[110] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

> finds it to it's advantage to treat men, who are now more than machines, in accordance with dignity.[112]

Kant understood that granting greater freedom to the individual would only result in greater restrictions upon the individual. He believed that although one may be able to overthrow "tyrannical opposition" through revolution it would not result in new ways of thinking for the individual[113]. Kant believed that if total freedom were granted all at once new prejudices would simply replace existing ones as a means to harness the great unthinking masses. It is the necessity for restrictions on the individual that Kant recognized as the paradox; only gradually can the individual be allowed to manage freedom. Kant believed that through this gradual process the "propensity and vocation to free thinking" would work itself back upon governing bodies that regulate the freedoms of the individuals[114].

Kant believed that we existed in an oppressed society and that the nature of that oppression was self-incurred. His essay provides the means by which we, as individuals, may identify whether we are oppressed. He also enables us to recognize the necessity to use our reason, which he categorizes in two ways - the public and private use of reason. Kant makes this distinction on the basis that true freedom can only be recognized gradually and in order to facilitate and protect this growth out of tutelage we must marginally restrict certain freedoms. Because some freedoms must be marginally restricted, Kant believed that there existed a continuous and important role for

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[112] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

[113] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

[114] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

government. He argued that the government's role would be to facilitate the individual's enlightenment, which would, over time, work itself back upon the government.

Kant's argument, through its emphasis on man's ability to function solely as a rational and logical being often leave much to be desired as it limits itself to a view of the world whereby the "truth" can be discerned solely through the use of one's reason. Because Kant's argument place such great emphasis on the individual's ability to become enlightened through the development of their capacity to use reason, he marginalizes the importance of the dialectical process that contributes to the advancement of philosophy and knowledge. By introducing the concept of "self incurred tutelage" and explaining the importance of using one's own reason to become enlightened Kant lays the beginnings of the foundations for individual development. These foundations begin to define to relationships that should exist between the individual and the state but because Kant places sole emphasis on the supremacy of one's reason he implies that through the use of our reason we can come to know "truth". This argument, and the relationships it begins to define, provides a rationale for individual autonomy but it fails to provide an adequate space for a dialectical process to occur. Without this process one would not be able to fully develop their capacity to use reason thereby always remaining, to a limited degree, in a state of self-incurred tutelage. It is because of Kant's excessive emphasis on the individual's use of individual reason to become enlightened that we must look for further elaboration in later philosophy.

The state of oppression Kant outlined still exists today as we move through our lives marginally aware of the fact that we allow many of our decisions to be made for us by others. As we continue to walk down the hallway it is important that we heed Kant's

call to action, "Sapere aude! 'Have the courage to use your own reason!"[115]. These words echo through time and move us to re-examine our progression towards enlightenment and those institutions that exist to facilitate that move.

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

John Stuart Mill

"men should be free to act upon their opinions — to carry these out in their lives, without hindrance, either physical or moral, from their fellow-men, so long as it is at their own risk and peril."[116]

As we take the next step in the hallway we can hear Kant's voice beginning to become overcome by another. As we stop, we begin to listen a little harder and, in doing so, desperately try to drown out the other voices that fill the hallway. As we concentrate we begin to clearly recognize a new voice.

We recognize the voice to be that of John Stuart Mill (1806-1872), son of philosopher James Mill (1773-1836), from his essay, "On Liberty"[117]. Mill's essay compliments the writing of Kant as he begins to provide a specific rational for moving away from oppression towards increased freedom and a pragmatic outline of how the individual can achieve this.

John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant share many common themes; yet, there are differences in their terminology. Like Kant, Mill believes that the well-being of mankind is dependant upon mankind's ability to use it's own reason. Mill believed that, should the individual not be allowed "freedom of opinion," individual power would diminish and the societies would increase[118]. This would lead to the imposition of other's "opinions and indoctrinations as a rule of conduct on others."[119] Although the terms Mill uses differ

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[116] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women,* (Hertfordshire, Great Britain, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1996.), p. 56.

[117] James Mill (1773-1836) was a Scottish philosopher and economist who was regarded as the father of utilitarianism.

[118] Mill, *op. Cit.*, p. 52.

[119] *Ibid.*, p.17.

from those of Kant, the theme remains the same; the individual, unable to use personal reason, exists in a state of oppression by which the state imposes its decisions upon the individual while denying the individual the opportunity to question those decisions.

Mill justifies the individual's right to freedom of opinion and freedom of the expression of opinion on four distinct grounds. The first of these is that "if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility."[120] By this claim, Mill asserts that to suppress an opinion rather than allow it to be challenged we assume that our own opinion is infallible. Should this occur we have no means of ascertaining whether there was any truth to that opinion. For Mill this would close what has commonly been referred to as the "Marketplace of Ideas" where truths of any and all ideas may be challenged. Mill recognized that to do this would be to, in Kant's words, deny the individual the right to use their own reason thereby closing the door to enlightenment.

The second justification Mill utilizes is that "though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied."[121] This rational, being a "dialectic process," was first proposed by a German philosopher named Hegel (1770-1831)[122]. Like Hegel, Mill sees this dialectic process as central to a "Marketplace of Ideas" in that an idea will facilitate a contradicting claim or

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[120] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[122] Jostein Gaarder, Sophie's World, (New York, United States of America, 1996.), p. 365.

negation that creates a tension between the two. This tension becomes resolved when a third claim is proposed which resolves the "diametrically opposed" claims by pointing out that they are both partly right and partly wrong[123]. Mill believed that only through this process could the whole truth be found.

The third justification Mill provides is that "even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth; unless it is suffered to be, and actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds."[124] Mill recognizes that even when presented with a truth in its entirety we need to vigorously challenge it or risk never understanding the rational grounds of the truth. Mill believed that, when we choose to debate an idea, we strengthen the truth contained within and we come to recognize and comprehend the rationale for the truth.

Mill concludes his justification with the argument that "the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled, and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, ineffectious for good, but cumbering the ground, and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience."[125] This is perhaps one of Mill's most important arguments when applied to social studies curriculum. In this justification Mill argues that should we, as individuals, not be allowed to challenge ideas and doctrines then they will degenerate into meaningless clichés for the individual. To do this would

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[123] *Ibid.*

[124] Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

marginalize the ideas and doctrines denying us the opportunity to develop any convictions regarding the truth contained within. Through the open debate of ideas we enable ourselves to develop conviction by using our reason or incorporating the idea/doctrine into our personal experience.

Recognizing the necessity of freedom of opinion and the freedom of expression of opinion Mill moves on to also argue that "men should be free to act upon their opinions — to carry these out in their lives without hindrance, either physical or moral, from their fellow-men so long as it is at their own risk and peril."[126] Although this claim seems brash and perhaps foolish on the surface, upon closer analysis one must pay special attention to the disclaimer at the end of the claim. By stating that the individual's actions should only be free as long as they are at the risk of only the individual, Mill places firm limits on actions and, to a lesser degree, even opinions. Mill emphasizes this in his claim that:

> Acts, of whatever kind, which, without justifiable cause, do harm to others, may be, and in the more important cases require to be, controlled by the unfavourable sentiments, and, when needful, by the active interference or mankind. The liberty of the individual must thus far be limited.[127]

From this claim we can see the common theme between Kant and Mill as they both argue that certain liberties must be restrained to protect the general public. Although Mill does not use the distinction between public and private use of reason as Kant does, he does make a distinction between the rights of the individual and those same rights

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[125] *Ibid.*

[126] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[127] *Ibid.*

when weighed against the interests of others. The common themes between these two philosophers results in one undeniable truth; there is a distinction that must be made when protecting the rights of the individual. It is the role of protecting and enforcing this distinction that Kant saw the role of government.

It is important to turn our attention to why Mill believes the above freedoms are imperative for the individual. Mill argues that the individual is oppressed by the existence of state interference and the existence of tradition and custom. Mill claimed, "It is the privilege and proper condition of a human being, arrived at the maturity of his faculties, to use and experience in his own way."[128] This claim, in its advocacy of the individual using reason, clearly reflects the argument of Kant. Mill believed that custom and tradition were the interpretation of experience by others and that this interpretation may be unsuitable when applied to the individual. He argued that for an individual "to conform to custom, merely as custom, does not educate or develop in him any of the qualities which are the distinctive endowment of a human being."[129] By this, Mill implies that custom precludes us from recognizing our full potential, as we are not able to choose our own path. It becomes dictated to us by custom.

Mill summarizes why it is imperative for the individual to use his or her own reason in the process of living their life in the following excerpt:

> He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgment to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision. And these

[128] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

> qualities he requires and exercises exactly in proportion as the part of his conduct [*sic*] which he determines according to his own judgment and feelings [*sic*] is a large one. It is possible that he might be guided in some good path, and kept out of harm's way, without any of these things. But what will be his comparative worth as a human being?[130]

Mill implies that for the individual to grow into an autonomous moral agent he or she must use his or her own reason in deciding on their direction in life. Mill has argued that to recognize their full potential he or she must throw off the yoke of custom and tradition. In this claim Mill does not stand alone, other voices join and add resolve to his such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who stated in his essay "Of Nature in Men":

> Nature is often hidden; sometimes overcome; seldom extinguished. Force maketh nature more violent in the return: doctrine and discourse maketh nature less importune: but custom only doth alter and subdue nature.[131]

This claim by Bacon anticipates Mill's arguments noting that through customs and traditions the individual's nature can become needlessly restrained thereby making those customs and traditions tools of oppression.

Mill's arguments begin to outline a pragmatic approach that individuals and even societies can take in reaching what Kant envisioned as enlightenment. Mill's arguments about freedom of opinion, expression of the opinion, and the freedom to act upon one's opinions provide a praxis on which the movement towards enlightenment can be based. Mill also compliments the work of Kant in that Mill moves the discourse of the effects of culture on the individual further as well as adding to Kant's dialogue regarding the imperative nature of enlightenment for the individual.

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[130] *Ibid.*

[131] Francis Bacon, Essays, (Hertfordshire, Great Britain, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997.), p. 107.

Mill's arguments regarding one's freedom to opinion, speech and action and the praxis that they provide for the individuals development towards enlightenment provide a significant advancement of Kant's arguments regarding the use of one's reason. This advancement, although significant, still does not form an adequate framework from which one can adequately understand the individual's development as a rational and autonomous individual. Mill's arguments become contentious in three ways, each of which need to be addressed through the work of further philosophers. The first contentious aspect of Mill's arguments is that his focus on the dialectical process fails to adequately elaborate on the benefits an individual receives from the process of participation in responsible decision making. Mill acknowledges that the individual develops their "facilities" through participation but he does not reflect on how that participation may affect an individual's knowledge of democratic processes[132]. Through his argument he only identifies, like Kant, that participation helps us to grow as individuals but he fails to identify the impact our participation has on the development and evolution of our participation within a given state. The second problematic aspect of Mill's arguments is in the fact that he perceives culture and traditions to be oppressive rather than valuable. Mill argues that the traditions and cultures of others is "evidence of what their experience has taught *them*; presumptive evidence" but as such he believes that it is prone to wrongful or narrow interpretation making it oppressive when generalized[133]. This view of culture and tradition becomes far too limiting as it assumes two that (1) it is possible to separate individual development from culture and tradition, and (2) that

[132] Mill. *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

culture and tradition have limited value when compared to the individual's capacity to use their own reason[134]. These assumptions work to undermine Mill's arguments, as he has not acknowledged the difficulties associated with separating culture and traditions from one's views about the world. This lack of acknowledgement casts a shadow on Mill's praxis, as it is questionable whether his model of dialectical process would be able to function without somehow finding a way to acknowledge the divergent cultural views of the participants. This becomes further complicated when the third deficiency in Mill's arguments is examined. Mill's arguments tend to view the dialectical process from only one cultural perspective making it fairly restricted when discussing divergent ideas or perspectives. It is questionable whether Mill envisioned a society such as Canada when he formed his arguments, as he has not acknowledged the increased pressures that are created in a given society when you have multiple cultures coexisting within a single national environment. With the undeniable existence of divergent cultural views the potential for problems and conflicts within Mill's dialectical process will inevitably increase and create a need to find someway to facilitate the process while continuing to take into account the many divergent cultural voices. Without accomplishing this Mill's arguments regarding freedoms will not create opportunities for advancement, but rather they will only lead to isolated cultural discourse that limits the individuals exposure to the value of foreign culture. It is because of these deficiencies in Mill's arguments that it becomes imperative to seek out further philosophy so that a more comprehensive and modern model for individual enlightenment can be found.

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[134] Although I have used the word "reason" here it is referred to as "faculties" by Mill in his essay "On Liberty".

Like Kant, Mill's voice resounds within the hallway, providing not only a portion of the foundation of curriculum but also beginning the journey through the curriculum. His voice gives the foundations its wheels to move ahead, to begin the journey forward John Stuart Mill is our guide as we witness the development of curriculum.

John Dewey

"The nature of experience can be understood only by noting that it includes an active and a passive element peculiarly combined."[135]

Step by step the hallway begins to provide clearer direction. As we move forward we hear a voice that has resounded loudly through time; we hear John Dewey. Born in Vermont, John Dewey has had a profound impact on our understandings of how we understand experience and how experience impacts our understandings. Born in 1859, John Dewey's work has impacted North American education and continues to be an influential force. His influence transcends time to provide new insights and further guidance. He draws us towards new paradigms of understanding.

Dewey's book, Democracy and Education, discusses what he understands to be the process of learning democratic ideals. The process that he proposes advocates that individuals develop democratic ideals and patterns of behaviour separate from democracy as merely a form of governance. Dewey argues that the "nature of experience" contains "an active and a passive element peculiarly combined."[136] This belief argues that we learn through experiencing or acting upon something. To Dewey, learning is an active process as the individual purposefully acts upon something. Dewey combined this belief in active learning with the notion that anytime we act upon something there will be a reaction or consequence to the action. This part of the learning process can be described as passive learning process. Since the consequences of the passive nature of the learning process are

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[135] Dewey, John. Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1916. p. 139.

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

often unanticipated by the learner the result can be valuable and significant learning experiences.

The active/passive nature of learning is what provides the greatest value, as the individual is able to develop the connections between actions and consequences. By understanding the process of learning and the nature of experience in the context of Dewey's understanding it is possible to expand upon Kant's belief that we must learn to use our own reason to attain enlightenment. Whereas Kant identifies enlightenment as breaking away from tyranny, Dewey moves us to understand learning as a means by which we adopt democratic ideals, which help us learn to act democratically. Through Dewey's understanding one can come to understand the experiential learning process as "cumulative"[137]. In this sense our learning becomes a "backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence."[138]

This process involves continuous, life-long learning from which the individual exists in a continuously evolving state. This state provides the individual with the capacity to develop democratic ideals as they become acquainted with knowledge through active experimentation. The active experimentation lends itself to the evolution of the individual's ability and motivation to actively participate in the learning process and the capacity to draw new knowledge from that participation.

By learning through an active/passive process individuals become familiar with active democratic behaviour. In developing this sense of democratic behaviour the

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[137] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[138] *Ibid.*

individual also learns to develop a personal connection with the material they are exposed to in educational environments providing them with a stronger connection to knowledge and the application thereof.

Dewey's theory of learning is an evolution of Kant and Mill. Dewey actively incorporates the ideas of Kant by acknowledging the importance of enlightenment for the individual and the role of reason in that enlightenment. He expands the ideas of Kant by arguing that the development of the individual and the individual's ability to learn do not occur solely as a product of reasoned thought. Dewey asserts that the "discovery of the connection of things" is a direct consequence of our experiential interaction with the world[139]. In keeping with Kant's belief that the individual can only develop his or her reason through the exercise of it, Dewey provides validity to Kant's arguments. He deviates from Kant in his exploration of what the "nature of experience" is and how it effects the development of meaning for the individual[140]. Dewey's understanding that experience or change when linked to consequences results in meaningful learning for the individual illustrates how we develop the capacity for reasonable decision making through constant practice and reflection. Through the process of reflection Dewey's theory becomes a critical piece of literature in understanding individual development.

Unlike Kant, Dewey argues that the process of individual enlightenment does not simply stem from the practice of using reason but rather it is also linked to the individual's ability to reflect upon the consequences of their decisions and the ability to

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[139] *Ibid.*

[140] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

connect the action to the consequences. In identifying this reflective process within the context of Kant's ideas, it is possible to view Dewey's ideas as a refinement of Kant. His reflective process provides a detailed and reasonable means from which an individual can develop their capacity to use reason.

Dewey's reflective process also acts to validate the views of John Stuart Mill, as when learning occurs in this form the individual is able to draw out connections between information and "doctrine"[141]. Within this context the reflective process allows the learner to develop a personal connection to ideas as they link their knowledge (consequence) to their experience.

Dewey's theory is also heavily connected to the ideas of Mill in that for the individual to fully explore his or her learning opportunities he or she needs a high degree of freedom. Dewey's theory enables us to understand that freedom of thought, opinion, and action are not only essential for validating the truth of ideas but are also essential for human development. For individuals to adequately develop their reasoning capacities, they must be allowed the latitude to experiment with the broadest range of actions and be the recipients of the consequences of those actions. This will enable individuals to develop what Mill describes as "real and heartfelt conviction" regarding the truth of ideas[142]. By learning through Dewey's active/passive process the individual is able to make a personal connection to ideas. This is achieved by enabling the individual to understand that our exposure to ideas has the potential to impact upon our lives and the larger communities that surround us.

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[141] Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[142] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Within Dewey's argument it becomes possible to identify the belief of Dewey's that education should not be conceived as an institution that simply prepares students for civil life by providing them with a series of disjointed facts and ideas that they are expected to use later in life. Dewey believed that education should be viewed as an extension of civil society and that students should operate as members of society, actively pursuing interests in cooperation with others. Dewey believed that, guided by cultural resources provided by teachers, children could prepare for the demands of responsible citizenship in a democratic community. Dewey's perception of what education ought to be has played a major role in the development of educational programming throughout western societies as his emphasis on the collective good of the society and the importance of cooperation with others became major themes of the 1930's during the depression[143].

Dewey's voice introduces us to the notion that learning is an active process by which individuals comes to understand that learning is a continuous process that constantly affects changes within ourselves and in the world around us. By acknowledging the importance of this interaction between the individual and ideas as well as identifying how this interaction can be meaningful Dewey enables us to gain a greater understanding of how meaningful learning can and should occur.

[143] The themes of collective goals and cooperation with others can be clearly seen in Alberta during the 1930's. In 1932 the Co-operative Commonwealth (CCF) was founded in Winnipeg, Manitoba by J. S. Woodsworth (1874-1942). This new political party argued for socialist reforms in society and increased freedom of speech and, during the depression, experienced a fair amount of popularity. Their ideas were eventually adopted by other national political parties and can be seen in many of Canada's national and provincial programs.

Charles Taylor

"Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being."[144]

Charles Taylor adds a modern voice to the philosophical discourse that permeates this paper. In one political writing, an essay entitled "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor turns his attention towards the politics surrounding society's need for recognition.

In attempting to understand Taylor's argument one must first understand that much of his argument is based on the "ideal of authenticity," which we have discussed earlier through Mill's expression of opinion and Kant's advocation that one should be true to their own reason[145]. Taylor, like Mill and Kant before him, advocates the idea that individuals must develop as individuals but, like Dewey, also recognizes that there is a "dialogical" necessity within individual development[146]. He recognizes that the individual does not develop as a solitary creature but rather his or her "own identity crucially depends on…dialogical relations with others"[147].

Taylor, tying identity to dialogical relationships, also notes that identities can only be formed through open dialogue. This new dimension to the arguments of Kant and Mill proposes that when participating in open dialogue we are not simply attempting to find truth in ideas but we are developing our own identity. Taylor notes that to deny this open

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[144] Charles Taylor, *"Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition"*, (New Jersey, United States of America, Princeton University Press, 1992.), p. 25.

[145] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[146] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[147] *Ibid.*

dialogue to any individual could be damaging. This possible damage makes equal recognition imperative.

Taylor notes that his discourse on recognition can be divided into two levels -- the public and the private. The private sphere is "where we understand the formation of identity and the self as taking place in a continuing dialogue and struggle with significant others." [148] This private discourse on recognition is that the individual needs equal recognition in the dialogical development of identity. The public discourse on identity, which Taylor discusses in his essay, will occupy this analysis. Taylor's public discourse on identity works upon the same premise as his private discourse; however, it pertains to the identity of cultures rather than individuals. Within this discourse Taylor recognizes two forms of politics at work -- the politics of universalism and the politics of difference.

The first of these politics, the politics of universalism, is based upon the concept that all citizens have equal dignity and the politics themselves work towards the "equalization of rights and entitlements."[149] The premise upon which the politics of universalism are based on, that of the principle of equal citizenship, have become universally accepted today. This principle of equal citizenship, in light of Kant and Mill, is an imperative, as the "Marketplace of Ideas" cannot exist without equal dignity being granted to all people and their ideas.

With the passage of time a second form of politics has arisen along with a modern notion of identity. These are the politics of difference. The politics of difference, as

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[148] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[149] *Ibid.*

Taylor notes, argues "Everyone should be recognized for his or her unique identity."[150] This form of politics asks that we recognize the distinctiveness of a certain group or individual because their distinct identity, supposedly, has been absorbed into a dominant or "majority identity" in the past which would have violated the ideal of authenticity[151].

Although both forms of politics appear both justifiable and necessary they are difficult to assimilate because one asks that we give acknowledgement to something that is not universally shared[152]. In response to this difficulty, Taylor reaches back to Kant who wrote on "What in human beings commands respect"[153]. Taylor utilizes Kant's concept of "universal human potential", a concept by which "potential, rather than anything a person my have made of it, is what ensures that each person deserves respect."[154] Taylor believes that universal human potential is an underlying concept for both forms of politics.

In the attempt to find a model by which the two forms of politics can be combined, Taylor reflects on two different models -- those of Kant and Rousseau. From Rousseau's model Taylor draws upon his ideas of a "balanced reciprocity" which, according to Rousseau, was essential to retain individual identities while working towards a common goal. In having a balanced reciprocity, Rousseau believes that an individual's identity is able to remain true to itself while being a part of a common goal or group.

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[150] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[151] *Ibid.*

[152] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[153] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[154] *Ibid.*

Where Taylor notes the weakness in this model is in the fact that a strong dependency on a "common purpose" can be "homogenizing" as it leaves very little room for differences[155].

The second model Taylor looks to is Kant's, which is based upon the premise that all citizens should have an equality of rights. Under this model, all citizens are entitled to equal rights, which is not congruent with the concept of Rousseau's collective goals. Taylor illustrates this through a Quebec case study arguing "collective goals may require restrictions on the behaviour of individuals that may violate their rights."[156] Kant's model is one of procedural liberalism by which we are all striving for an end. This view, congruent with the aforementioned Kantian argument on enlightenment and Mill's arguments regarding mankind's right to self-determination and expression, has grown popular and has become a part of our conception of a liberal society today. Apart from the popularity of this model Taylor, as he did with Rousseau, identifies what he believes is a weakness in Kant's model. He notes that in a society where individual rights are entrenched there can be no promotion of public concepts of "notions of the good."[157]

Each model contributes key attributes to a successful liberal democracy. Although each has value, they are distinctly different. First, one can facilitate collective goals at the risk of homogenizing the society; second, another considers certain basic human rights inalienable while being inhospitable to collective goals. Much of the previous writing in this paper (Kant and Mill) relates to this second model. Taylor, recognizing the weakness

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[155] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[156] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[157] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

of both models in attempting to create a place for the preservation of culture, proposes that it is not a procedural model of liberalism that we need but rather a compromise by which the integrity of cultures has a place. This compromise becomes an expansion of Kant and Mill as in today's world of multiple cultures coexisting procedural liberalism is far too rigid.

Taylor notes that, although one could argue that there is a need for separation between the state and other contentious topics, there cannot be any separation. His claim that "liberalism can't and shouldn't claim complete cultural neutrality" reaffirms his contention that liberalism cannot be separated from culture and nor can it be used to marginalize or destroy culture[158]. As societies become more multicultural we must remain open to them while maintaining basic human rights. This balance between culture and individual rights is reminiscent of Kant and Mill; however, it integrates a role for the state in protecting culture into what Kant regarded as the private use of reason where some rights may be restricted to achieve this goal. Although this may appear to contravene the earlier arguments of Kant and Mill it does not. Taylor identifies culture as being subjugated in the same manner as the individual, allowing cultures to exist is not enough, we must recognize their worth and in order to achieve this the cultures must have equality.

The recognition of worth pertaining to specific cultures is not easily achieved due to the fact that, when studying other cultures, we tend to use our own standards by which

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[158] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

to gauge their worth. What Taylor believes is needed is what Gadamer referred to as a "fusion of horizons"[159]. Taylor describes this "fusion of horizons" as operating:

> Through our developing new vocabularies of comparison, by means of which we can articulate these contrasts. So that if and when we ultimately find substantive support for our initial presumption, it is on the basis of an understanding of what constituted worth that we couldn't possibly have had at the beginning.[160]

Taylor's description of this "fusion" identifies that, in studying the worth of any culture, we begin with certain presumptions. As we study another culture we may prove our initial presumption of value but only through the transformation of our own standards.

The transformation of standards becomes the key to understanding the value of other cultures. We must change our standards to truly understand other cultures as if we were to presume the equal worth of all cultures without any study we would only be committing an "act of breathtaking condescension."[161] To make any real judgements of value we must have a "fused horizon" by which we are transformed by what we study. This concept was made familiar through Mill's argument on personal experience. Taylor insists that we cannot simply judge by our own familiar standards.

In identifying the importance of studying other cultures and transforming our standards in the process we come to enlighten our understandings of the world by broadening our horizons. Taylor summarizes this concept by stating "what the presumption [of worth] requires of us is not peremptory and inauthentic judgements of equal value, but a willingness to be open to comparative cultural study of the kind that

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[159] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[160] *Ibid.*

[161] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

must displace our horizons in the resulting fusions."[162] In the displacement of our horizons we create new fusions. Openness to the "Marketplace of Ideas" can displace our horizons. By incorporating new ideas into our personal experience, we gain a new fusion by which we can evaluate or judge the worth of other cultures critically without infringing upon their recognition as a culture of unique origin.

In Taylor's discussion of recognition and the politics that surround it, valuable perspectives are provided as to the modern political world and the role of culture within it. Charles Taylor, through his essay, provides the means to progressively move the ideas of Kant and Mill forward as he recognizes their effects on modern society. Taylor makes valuable and progressive contributions by elevating classic philosophy into a modern context and through the inclusion of culture into the argument of freedom from oppression.

Taylor, like Kant and Mill before him, argues for the individual's right to freely develop identity but, unlike Kant and Mill, identifies that this development is a dialogical process involving multiple individuals rather than solely the individual. Taylor also notes the imperative need for equality in this process and the necessity of equal recognition. Taylor identifies two different forms of politics at work within the politics of recognition. These two politics, the politics of universalism and difference, are both necessary to the politics of recognition although they pull against one another. Through an analysis of each of these politics Taylor proposes a process by which the push-pull relationship between the two politics can be resolved. Within their resolution, Taylor argues that true enlightenment can occur as both the individual and cultural groups can develop true

[162] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

identities without having images imposed upon them by others. Taylor's reconciliation of the two different politics proposes that individual and cultural identity can be achieved and the politics of recognition can be reconciled.

The Alberta High School Social Studies Program

"...none of the mistakes which men can make are due to faulty inference; they are caused merely by the fact that we found upon a basis of poorly comprehended experiences, or that propositions are posited which are hasty and groundless."[163]

René Descartes reminds us that when we attempt to examine something we must begin anew and we must guard against mistakes that have been made in the past. When analyzing Alberta high school social studies curriculum, we must begin at the basic underlying foundations and the primary goal.

Within Canada, and essentially all nation-states, individuals can never escape the involvement of the state in their lives. This involvement comes in many forms and often influences all aspects of our lives, even if we are not immediately aware of the influence. Although many consider the influence of the state to be negative upon the individual, others such as Kant and Taylor believed that such influence could be essential in the enlightenment process. One of the most prominent and influential examples of this influence is the Canadian educational system, through which individuals become educated in a variety of subjects at differing levels. These subjects are taught according to curriculum standards set by the provincial departments of education. For a large portion of their lives, Albertans are under the direct influence of the state.

The Alberta social studies curriculum for the 10, 20, and 30 program (last revised in 2000) provides the rationale and framework for what teachers in these areas are to teach. The curriculum guide is divided into three sections: (1) program rationale and

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[163] René Descartes, Key Philosophical Writings, (Hertfordshire, Great Britain, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997.), p. 7.

philosophy, (2) general learner expectations, and (3) specific learner expectations -- which contain a breakdown of each topic to be studied over the course of the year.

To begin an analysis of the curriculum, we must first carefully examine the foundations in the social studies curriculum. These foundations are found in the program rationale and philosophy portion. Here, great emphasis is given to the development of students into "responsible citizens and contributing members of society."[164]

This emphasis develops the idea that the curriculum is designed to encourage students to be subjective learners who actively contribute to society. By specifying that students should be seen as subjective learners the curriculum specifies that they should be perceived "as self-motivated, self-directed problem solvers and decision makers who are developing the skills necessary for learning and who develop a sense of self-worth and confidence in their ability to participate in a changing society."[165]

From Kant's perspective, this curriculum foundation is imperative. "Contributing members" of society is a phrase that involves the individual's ability to use reason. Kant would argue that this ability to use one's own reason in curriculum is essential, as a society would lose its ability to exist in an enlightened state should the individual fail to be able to critically contribute to the state's governance. Kant would contend that education's key role is to facilitate the development of individual enlightenment and protect and perpetuate societal enlightenment without resorting to violent revolt, effectively changing while maintaining the integrity of the governing system.

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[164] Alberta Learning, Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Guide (10-20-30), (Edmonton, Alberta, 2000.), p. 1.

[165] Ibid.

For Kant, the existence of the enlightened state was contingent upon the involvement of all individuals. He believed that individuals, through the development of their capacity to use reason in making decisions, could constantly act to guide the state so that it would always be receptive to the needs of the people. For this reason, Kant would perceive this aspect of curriculum as necessary and beneficial.

John Dewey would add that, treating the learner subjectively would also facilitate active/passive learning in students. Since students are empowered to learn through a process of self-motivation and self-direction, they develop an awareness of how their actions result in consequences. This awareness enables them to develop a distinct personal rapport with the knowledge they gain. Dewey would argue that this knowledge is necessary for it provides individuals with the necessary understanding of how actions are tied to consequences – a fundamental learning tool people will need if they are to function as effective and active citizens.

The program rationale and philosophy goes on to specify that the social studies program "prepares students for active and responsible participation in a changing world."[166] This bold statement, if presumed to be true, would reflect Kant's ideals. In achieving this, the curriculum must emphasize developing students' critical thinking skills so that they may act as autonomous individuals using their own reason. This is encouraged further as the program recognizes that "Students will need to be able to acquire knowledge, to interpret and communicate information, and to solve problems and

[166] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

make decisions."[167] Noting the necessity for students to acquire these abilities, the value of critical thinking skills cannot be understated.

Upon stressing the need to create "responsible citizens and contributing members of society" the program rationale and philosophy vaguely defines how students should be approached with the curriculum[168]. The program of studies states that:

> the concept of learners as receivers of information should be replaced with a view of learners as self-motivated, self-directed problem solvers and decision makers who developing the skills necessary for learning and who develop a sense of self-worth and confidence in their ability to participate in a changing society.[169]

By advocating this approach, the curriculum appears to parallel the ideas of Kant and Mill. It advocates a subjective approach to learning where students are encouraged to develop the ability to use their own reason. This is reflected in the curriculum directive that students are to become "self-motivated, self-directed problem solvers."[170] It also appears to perpetuate Mill's concept of the "Marketplace of Ideas" in that students are to be encouraged to challenge ideas so that these young citizens may develop their own sense of truth regarding those ideas. For Mill, the students' ability to develop "confidence in their ability to participate in a changing society" is directly related to their opportunity to challenge ideas and integrate those ideas into their personal experience[171].

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[167] *Ibid.*

[168] *Ibid.*

[169] *Ibid.*

[170] *Ibid.*

[171] *Ibid.*

The program rationale and philosophy, by itself, clearly reflects the ideas of Kant and Mill. Although this idea may suggest that the curriculum is directed at the enlightenment of the individual, the vague nature of the claims leaves a certain amount of doubt. To understand whether the curriculum does meet the broad objectives laid out in this section, it is important to examine the specific knowledge objectives of the curriculum and the content of the curriculum. By examining the curriculum in its entirety, it becomes possible to ascertain whether the curriculum maintains consistency in meeting the general objectives set forth in the program rationale and philosophy.

Within the section of general learner expectations, the curriculum provides a far more specific definition of its objectives. From the outset, the curriculum defines "Responsible citizenship..." as the "...ultimate goal of social studies."[172] Within this single claim, we can see strong parallels between the ideas of Kant and the objectives of curriculum. These parallels are further exemplified by the curriculum's strong emphasis on the "development of critical thinking" within students[173]. Kant would consider the emphasis on responsible citizenship and the critical thinking skills imperative for the existence of an enlightened society because these skills allow individuals to utilize the critical use of reason within their daily lives.

To move further into an analysis of the general learner expectations, it is important to understand what is meant by "responsible citizenship"[174]. Within the curriculum responsible citizenship is defined as:

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[172] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[173] *Ibid.*

[174] *Ibid.*

-understanding the role, rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democratic society and a citizen in the global community
-participating constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions
-respecting the dignity and worth of self and others[175]

The first of these three is a basic premise to any form of enlightenment in that individuals must understand their rights and roles within a given democratic society. To perpetuate and protect the democracy, individuals must be informed so that they may actively participate in the democratic process.

The second claim, in addition to emphasizing the participation in the democratic process, adds to the idea that, to participate, individuals must be able to make "rational decisions." This focus on rational again returns to the ideas of Kant[176]. To participate in a democratic process, individuals must be free to actively use their own reasons. If allowed to actively do this, they may pursue enlightenment, which, if achieved, works its way back upon the society in which the individual lives.

The last attribute of responsible citizenship is strongly grounded in both Kant and Mill as well as reflecting the idea's of Charles Taylor. In "respecting the dignity and worth of self and others," one must be allowed to use their own reason[177]. This is imperative, as Mill would argue, because individuals must be able to choose a way of life for themselves and, to do this, must employ "all of his [or her] faculties"[178]. They must be

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[175] *Ibid.*

[176] *Ibid.*

[177] *Ibid.*

[178] Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

granted the freedom of opinion, the freedom to express that opinion, and the freedom to act upon that opinion (although the freedom of action is restrained, as discussed earlier).

Taylor also emphasizes these aspects of freedom in his description of the politics of universality. For Taylor, it cannot be emphasized enough that one must respect "the equal dignity of all citizens."[179] Taylor also adds to it through expending the equal respect to cultures as well as individuals. Through Taylor's extension, we can begin to examine the curriculum from a distinctly Canadian perspective.

As noted earlier, Taylor entered into a discourse on the politics of recognition in an attempt to reconcile the politics of difference with the politics of universalism in a multicultural society. The Alberta Social Studies Curriculum is not blind to this issue; however, it is not forthright about the issue either. The curriculum does note that "the Canadian community...is changing rapidly" and that, in light of this change, it is increasingly important to impart, to students, knowledge and skills which are imperative for "lifelong learning and responsible citizenship."[180] As the curriculum works to impart these skills and knowledge, there can be no question that the primary goal of the social studies curriculum must be the development of critical thinking so that individuals may actively engage their own reason, especially within a democratic society.

With the knowledge that the core objective of the social studies curriculum is the creation of responsible citizens with well-developed critical thinking skills, we may actively analyze specific learner expectations. These expectations include skill, knowledge, and attitude objectives.

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[179] Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[180] Alberta Education, *op. cit.* p. 3.

The skill objectives in curriculum can be divided into three categories: process skills, communication skills, and participation skills. All three skill sets are essential to the acquisition of critical thinking and cannot be ignored or marginalized. These skills, when defined as a whole, enable students to acquire, evaluate, utilize, express, present, and interact with information, ideas, and other individuals[181]. The knowledge objectives in curriculum are organized through "generalizations and key understandings, concepts and related facts."[182]

Although there are three different categories, the latter two pertain strictly to unbiased facts and terminology necessary to the understandings of larger generalizations and key understandings. The important and, at times, contentious portion of the knowledge understandings lies in the generalizations and key understandings. These are defined as follows: "A generalization is a rule or principle that shows relationships among two or more concepts. A key understanding is a statement of a major understanding related to the content of the unit."[183]

Attitude objectives in the curriculum "describe a way of thinking, feeling or acting and are developed through a variety of learning experiences that encompass knowledge and skill objectives"[184]. To achieve these objectives, students must be allowed to learn through free and open inquiry. Because all three of these specific learner objectives often overlap, this freedom of inquiry becomes a necessity. Within the specific attitude

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[181] *Ibid.*

[182] *Ibid.*

[183] *Ibid.*

[184] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

objectives, there are two which merit special attention. First, students should develop "attitudes of respect, tolerance and understanding toward individuals, groups and cultures in one's community and in other communities." Second, they should develop "positive attitudes about democracy, including an appreciation of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship"[185]. These two attitude objectives are profoundly influential in light of a critical examination of the generalizations within the grade ten social studies curriculum.

Generalizations and Key Understandings

The Alberta social studies ten curriculum focuses on Canada in the modern world and is divided into two general topics. The first topic is "Challenges for Canada: The 20th Century and Today," which is subdivided into three themes; Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Identity[186]. The second topic is "Citizenship in Canada," which is subdivided into three themes; Politics and Government, Citizen Participation, and Rights and Responsibilities[187]. To identify disparities that exist between the primary goal of the program and specific curriculum content, it is necessary to examine generalizations and key understandings that fall under the sub- themes. The first can be identified in the sub theme of Identity.

Within the identity theme the generalization is put forth that "Bilingualism [*sic*] and multiculturalism are fundamental to the Canadian identity."[188] As written, this can be

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[185] *Ibid.*

[186] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[187] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[188] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

construed to be a rule or principle that students are intended to accept as a statement of fact, which is a necessary part of the knowledge objectives. Although many generalizations and key understandings found in curriculum can unequivocally be argued to be statements of fact, the above cannot. The above claim is contentious at best because it involves value judgements about government policies that have had a limited existence in Canada's history. The statement may or may not be true, but the fact that this claim is presented to students in a manner that does not encourage active student inquiry is fundamentally problematic. When presented in such an uncritical manner, the claim becomes a "truth" that appears to push a nationalistic objective. As such, it becomes a propagandizing tool. Once this occurs, the curriculum contravenes both the written objectives of the curriculum and the foundations upon which those objectives are based.

To begin to understand how this contravention occurs, we must return to the role of education in the enlightenment of the individual. Education, as an extension of the democratic state, perpetuates the creation of enlightened individuals. It does this to create and preserve a liberal democracy in which all citizens can exist within an environment in which they are afforded the right to free thought. Thus, they must freely choose their own path in life, influenced by but free from the interference from the state. To achieve this goal, the curriculum must, without question, carefully and unfailingly follow its written objectives and develop critical thinkers able to responsibly and actively contribute to the construction or evolution of a democratic society. From a Kantian perspective, these assumptions of empirical truth in curriculum serve to objectify the individual. They do this through denying individuals opportunities to use their own reason. By presenting value assumptions as empirical truths, individuals are denied opportunities to question

underlying ideas within the curriculum. In fact, they are asked to assume something to be factually true without being able to question it at all. When this occurs, individuals are denied opportunities to understand things for themselves. The curriculum presumes to identify "truths" for citizens thereby denying them any opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and encouraging their eventual progression into a state of "self-incurred tutelage."[189] Within such states, individuals, unable to use their own reason, become oppressed and find themselves unable to actively contribute to the construction or evolution of democracy. This problem is especially prominent in what Kant regarded as the public sphere as individuals are denied opportunities to develop the necessary skills needed to actively contribute to the promotion of enlightenment. As Kant noted, the role of government is to ensure that the process of enlightenment occurs. Yet, it is precisely this process that the social studies curriculum would present an unbearable oppression of the individual.

From Mill's perspective, the assumptions within the curriculum would again, like Kant, present an oppressive force upon the individual. To understand this oppression, we must apply each of Mill's four grounds upon which he justified freedom of opinion, the freedom to express that opinion, and the freedom to act upon those opinions.

Under Mill's first rationale, by presenting a value assumption as factual truths, the curriculum tends to act to compel dissident opinion into silence. If this is indeed true, the curriculum assumes to be infallible and denies the individual the opportunity to search for truth in an alternative opinion.

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[189] Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

Second, Mill would argue that these curriculum assumptions restrict the "Marketplace of Ideas" by not allowing individuals to engage in a dialectical process. Without this dialectical process, individuals are never allowed to openly question ideas and, through that questioning, discover new ideas. This lack of questioning objectifies students, who become receptacles for ideas that they are not allowed to challenge.

Mill's third rationale illustrates how, by presenting students with assumptions not open to debate, the curriculum serves to demean the ideas it is attempting to convey. Mill argues that, when individuals are not allowed to debate ideas, those ideas will most likely be perceived "in the manor of a prejudice."[190] Such prejudice would deny students the opportunity to understand the rational grounds of the idea and, although the idea may have merit and truth to it, the student will never come to recognize it. This would result in an inability of individuals to become enlightened as they are denied any true comprehension of ideas.

Mill concluded his justifications by noting that to deny individuals the freedom to challenge ideas renders those ideas dogmatic. In the face of such dogmatism, individuals fail to develop personal convictions about the truth of these ideas. The curriculum, by presenting assumptions as truths, risks making the ideas within the assumptions dogmatic. When this happens, those ideas, which may well be true, become "lost" to individuals denied the opportunity to develop personal convictions about these ideas. When assumptions are not debated, the curriculum demeans these ideas and prohibits

[190] Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

students from developing personal convictions about the ideas they are supposed to come to understand and learn[191].

The curriculum, by failing to adhere to the grounds that Mill sets forth, serves not only to limit but even to oppress the individual's freedom of opinion and expression. In fact, the curriculum also oppresses the students' abilities to act upon their opinions. When individuals are unable to properly form opinions, their actions automatically become restricted. The curriculum, by presenting assumptions as truths, limits the students' abilities to think critically and their abilities to act on their own behalf. By denying students the opportunities to develop their own ideas and perceptions of the world, the curriculum limits their opportunities to live their own lives. The curriculum further limits the opportunities of the individual because it denies them the means to develop the necessary skills to use their own reason and judgment. In doing this, the curriculum limits the human faculties students might access, thus making students susceptible to further oppression.

This argument is reinforced by the work of John Dewey, who recognizes the importance of active learning. From Dewey's perspective of curriculum, presenting assumptions as truths and denying students opportunity to challenge the truth of ideas restricts students from actively learning. In doing this, the curriculum impedes the active/passive process of learning. Students unable to actively challenge ideas and work with them are unable to experience any passive element to their learning and, thus,

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[191] It is important to acknowledge that although the curriculum as written leaves very little room for debate it does not preclude individual teachers from taking the initiative to facilitate debate in the classroom. Although some might argue it is through the efforts of individual teachers that the flaws in curriculum can be overcome, this does not invalidate the fact that the curriculum itself remains inherently flawed.

receive no meaningful learning experience. Dewey would argue that meaningful curriculum must facilitate students' active participation so that they may challenge ideas and their groundings. The outcome of such challenge would be to understand the consequences of those ideas. As students work with ideas, they can come to understand that these ideas are not simply arbitrary rules but rather are grounded in logic. By doing this, students develop a deeper personal rapport with the material they learn and the learning experience becomes even more meaningful.

Dewey would also argue that encouraging students to actively challenge ideas can develop the skills necessary to participate more effectively in a democratic society. Students who learn to challenge ideas become accustomed to engaging in a Hegelian dialectical process by which, as mentioned by Mill, they can more accurately tease truth out of ideas and develop a more just decision-making paradigm. Through this process, students come to develop the necessary skill sets for active participation in the development and evolution of democratic societies.

Charles Taylor also adds significant arguments when engaged in an analysis of curriculum as being an oppressive force. From Taylor's perspective, the assumptions within the curriculum fail to allow individuals to recognize their own identities. By presenting assumptions as truths, the curriculum does not allow individuals to debate these assumptions, thereby omitting growth through dialectical relationships.

Taylor also extends this understanding to the development of cultural identity, thereby understanding the curriculum to not only oppress the individual but also to oppress the cultural growth of a society. Taylor's emphasis on the necessity of recognizing the worth of the individual and of cultures enables us to recognize how

assumptions can demean and even condescend to that worth. To disallow individuals to use their own reason and, more importantly for Taylor, to make arbitrary value judgements regarding both the individual and cultural groups is highly demeaning. Taylor would see this as inhibiting individual ability to experience a "fusion of horizons," by which the individual and cultures can develop new vocabularies through dialectic dialogue they use to articulate contrasts between different cultures. Taylor believes such contrasts and comparisons transform our standards for judging the worth of other cultures by broadening our horizons. The curriculum, through its assumptions, seriously limits individual ability to develop new vocabularies as it limits and at times prohibits any dialectic discourse on ideas.

The assumptions within the curriculum limit the student's opportunity to engage in open study of ideas and restrict students' attainment of a "fused horizon." Unable to attain such a horizon, students are unable to be transformed by their study and are unable to make informed value judgments. Taylor would argue that a curriculum that places students in this position denies them opportunity to experience personal growth through what they study and restricts them to one set of unchanging standards by which to judge worth. This results in student inability to give due recognition to other individuals and cultures -- an unbearable restriction upon individual and societal growth, especially within the modern context of multiculturalism and globalization.

From the perspectives of the four philosophers, the assumptions within the curriculum content would potentially have damaging effects upon the individual's personal growth. Furthermore, the content, because of its assumptions, contradicts its own written objectives, which illustrates how, in the development of the curriculum, the

objectives are misconstrued, maladaptive, or confusing. The content does not encourage its own primary objectives. The curriculum fails to create "responsible citizens" because it does not actively encourage and develop critical thinking skills in students[192]. Although the curriculum objectives appear to reflect the ideals of enlightenment, the content utilized to reach that goal directly contravenes the original objectives. The existence of contrary assumptions within the curriculum content, instead of thus empowering individuals, serves to oppress them according to its own standards. It denies individuals the opportunity to acquire the essential skills they need to actively participate within a democratic setting; it prohibits individuals from actively developing personal convictions from what they study; it marginalizes or inhibits the "Marketplace of Ideas;" and it denies the individual the right to develop and judge both personal and cultural identity by denying dialectical relationships and open dialogue regarding the assumptions (even though the goals of the curriculum specify otherwise).

The existence of these problems enables us to see how the curriculum objectifies students rather than enables them as subjective learners. Once this occurs, students are no longer able to grow towards enlightenment as they are denied the opportunity to use their own reason and therefore unable to become true critical thinkers.

By understanding where the problems exist within the curriculum, we can see that an inability to truly understand the nature of the curriculum objectives causes serious and damaging errors in the development of the content. The curriculum or curriculum materials, in presenting value assumptions as factual truths, confuses and conflicts with the primary objectives. I would argue that this illustrates a lack of understanding about

[192] Alberta Learning, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

what the primary goal actually entails in terms of the philosophical foundations of liberal rationalism and morality. Thus, the curriculum fails to encourage the enlightenment of the individual and becomes a tool of oppression restricting individual freedom and degrading the democracy it is meant to perpetuate and protect. With this understanding, Descartes and the enlightenment tradition becomes imperative to heed; basing curriculum on rashly designed or poorly understood objectives would be a grievous error. We must carefully use our reason to explore our timeless experiences and from these, after careful analysis, embark upon the creation of a new and enlightened curriculum. We must begin anew from a blank slate and formulate well-understood objectives using both our understandings and all those understandings that came before us.

The work of those moral and ethical theorists who have preceded us helps us realize that we must come to a new understanding, which broadens our educational horizons and calls us to pedagogical action. We understand the necessity of applying the words of our past to our actions in the future. In applying them to the curriculum, we realize that such an important step towards enlightenment only seems to be a beginning.

Democratic Limitations in Curriculum

"The nineteenth century was a period of purposeful, progressive, enlightened, tolerant civilization. The stir in the world arising from the French Revolution, added to the Industrial Revolution unleashed by the steam engine and many key inventions, led inexorably to the democratic age."[193]

In coming to understand the curriculum, we realize that, in itself, it cannot answer all of our questions. The faults that lie within the program do not simply lie in its construction, but also within the societal structures that comprise Canada. To fully understand the paradoxical problems that hinder the development of a truly meaningful curriculum, we must examine the impact that Canadian democratic structures have on the development of curriculum. We must examine the curriculum within the very context it is designed to perpetuate.

To understand that the Alberta senior high social studies curriculum fails to meet the primary goal outlined within it, we must attempt to explore the curriculum within the context of Canadian democracy. By doing this, we begin to understand that the curriculum is strongly impacted by the very system in which it exists. The nature of Canadian democracy has a profound effect on the development of Canadian social studies curriculum and the definitions of citizenship inherent within it. To affect substantial and meaningful evolution in Alberta curriculum, it is necessary to explore the relationship between the curriculum and the democratic structures that influence its development.

The topic of citizenship has become more contested than ever. It has undergone resurgence in recent years as people strive to move the definition of citizenship towards a more inclusive meaning. This progressive evolution of citizenship can be partially

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[193] Winston S. Churchill, The Great Democracies, (USA: 1958.) p. viii.

attributed to the increase in the power of multinational corporations, a decline in the power of smaller nation-states, and an increased individual awareness of civic rights. The recent protests, such as the Peoples Summit of the Americas in Quebec City and the Seattle riots during a meeting of the World Trade organization, indicate the growing discontent among many citizens regarding globalization trends. This discontent has caused many people to become more self-aware of their rights and has motivated them to actively attempt to affect government actions.

As people become more self-aware, they also find it difficult to effect change. In fact, their attempts are often met with hostility. These limitations on individual democratic rights are often attributed to globalization and related institutions, however they fail to take into account how democratic structures in a given nation-state impact upon citizenship and individual rights. This gap between democratic structures and citizenship makes evolutions in citizenship problematic.

The term "democratic" has been used by numerous nation states to legitimate political decisions; but, often these decisions have varied greatly. The variation and disparity between these decisions indicates the contested nature of democracy itself. Democracy does not exist in a single form but rather as an evolutionary process from which numerous models have come into existence[194]. These models of democracy vary greatly, often falling into what could be categorized as "participatory" or "representative" forms of democracy[195]. These different models have been adopted by democratic nation-

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[194] David Held explores these various models of democracy in his book Models of Democracy. Held traces the patterns of influence through the process of democratic evolution.

[195] James C. Walker, *"Education for Democracy: The Representation/Participation Dualism"*. Educational Theory. Vol. 42, (1992.) p. 2.

states, enabling them to be described as democratic while still accounting for the differences between their individual governing practices.

The recognition that democratic structures vary also entails a need to become aware of how these structures affect the rights and responsibilities of citizens. What many perceive to be a right and just form of citizenship may not be conducive to a specific democratic structure. This rift between evolving conceptions of citizenship and democratic structures that have become inflexible and unresponsive can account for the growing anti-globalization and rights movements. This rift can be seen through the fact that changing conceptions of citizenship appear detached from the interests of the state, further widening the gap between the people and the state.

To understand how the gap between evolutions in citizenship and democratic structures exists, it is important to examine the Alberta social studies program for senior high school. This area is important, especially in Canada, as social studies programs in high schools place primary emphasis on the creation of responsible citizens through the development of critical thinking skills[196]. This primary emphasis of social studies programs creates a necessity to engage in a critical reflection on the curriculum to understand how the curriculum, Canadian democracy, and citizenship are related and whether that relationship is conducive to the primary goal.

Educational Discourse:

In Canadian educational discourse today, and more specifically in the area of social studies education, the focus has been directed towards the structure of the

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[196] Alberta Learning, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

curriculum. Researchers have become increasingly frustrated with the marginalization of certain groups in the curriculum[197]. These "deficiencies" in curriculum have enabled a shift in the discourse by which educators who previously endorsed the curriculum have now come to criticize it. As the recognition of how the curriculum has come to oppress certain groups has increased, many researchers have advocated a restructuring of education[198]. This growing consensus for change in the curriculum revolves around the idea of increasing the democratic structure of schools to provide greater opportunities for meaningful student involvement.

A barrier to this achievement is that current educational research has not addressed the value or impact of the current democratic system. This issue is most apparent in the article by Alan Sears and Andrew Hughes, which states that the curriculum involves "a knowledge of rights and obligations as well as a commitment to the ideals of Canadian democracy," but does not critically examine the value of the Canadian democratic system[199]. As research continues to focus on questions of citizenship[200] or assumes the current democratic systems to be the best,[201] there will be

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[197] Graham Reynolds. *"Teaching First Nations History as Canadian History"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 34, (2000.); Wayne Gorman. *"Canadian Native Students and Inequitable Learning"*. Canadian Social Studies. Vol. 33, (1999.)

[198] Benjamin Levin. *"The Educational Requirement for Democracy"* Curriculum Inquiry. Vol. 28:1. (Massachusetts, USA: 1998.); Alan M. Sears and Andrew S. Hughes. *"Citizenship Education and Current Educational Reform"*. Canadian Journal of Education. Vol. 21, (1996.); David Hursh, and Aggie Seneway. *"Living, Not Practicing, Democracy at School"*. Theory and Research in Social Education. Vol. 26, (1998.); John Dayton. *"Democracy, Public Schools, and the Politics of Education"*. Review Journal of Philosophy & Social Science. Vol. 20, (1995.); Robert H. Brady and James L. Barth. *Reclaiming the Spirit of the Social Studies"*. Social Education. Vol. 59, (1995.)

[199] Sears and Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[200] *Ibid.*

[201] Brady & Barth, *op. cit.*; Hursh & Seneway, *op. cit.*; Levin, *op. cit.*

few opportunities for real and valuable change. To truly affect change, we must re-examine our understandings of theoretical democratic structures and apply those understandings to ascertain their impact and pragmatic value.

This transition in the focus of the current research discourse must involve the recognition that citizenship education is far more complex than currently acknowledged. Although there is a recognition that problems do exist with current citizenship education practices, there is a failure to examine the underlying democratic model from which the curriculum has evolved. Since different democratic models have different implicit understandings of citizenship, it is important to develop an understanding of the models. Because current criticisms of citizenship education place emphasis on how current social studies education fails to actively engage learners in active democratic practice, they fail to note whether the democratic model itself is designed to accommodate such forms of democratic participation. By doing this they place their emphasis on educating students to participate in a democratic system that does not facilitate that form of participation.

To bridge this gap in the discourse, it is necessary to tie educational discourses into an understanding of the political sciences whereby democratic structures are taken into account when discussing citizenship education. This can enable the discourse to begin to seek ways to restructure democratic governing models to meet the changing nature of citizenship. This step is not new, as others such as Michael Ignatieff have noted the changing nature of citizenship and the need for democratic governing structures to change to meet them[202]. Although this step has been advocated by others, it continues to remain unaddressed in social studies education discourse.

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[202] Michael Ignatieff, The Rights Revolution. CBC Massey Lecture Series, (Canada: 2000.)

Canadian Democracy:

To begin to understand the triadic relationship in Alberta between social studies education, citizenship education, and democratic theory it is important to understand the democratic model that currently describes Canada. To find a democratic model for Canadian society, it is necessary to move beyond a single model. One model that provides insight is a Competitive Elitist Democratic model,[203] initially derived from the work of Max Weber. Held's analysis of Weber's ideas identifies Weber's belief that, as international demands on a nation increase, there is a greater need for expert bureaucrats. He believed that these expert bureaucrats, when paired with a strong parliament and leader would be the most effective form of democratic organization[204].

Weber's model reflects the Canadian political system through the identification of the common parliamentary political processes in Canada. He also illustrates a process by which political parties evolve into an "elected dictatorship" through which the power resides with the expert bureaucrats and professional politicians[205]. Weber believed this model to be an effective hierarchical system as he held the electorate in low regard believing that they were "unable generally to discriminate among policies and …capable only of making some kind of choice among possible leaders."[206]

To supplement gaps in Weber's theory, Held also looked at the work of Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter held a Hobbesian view of citizens, holding their political

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[203] David Held, Models of Democracy. 2nd Ed., (Stanford, California: 1996.) p. 197.

[204] *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

[205] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

[206] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

abilities in low regard. He believed that citizens should only have "minimal political involvement: that involvement which could be considered sufficient to legitimate the right of competing political elites to rule."[207] He thought that the only role that existed for the electorate was to elect the leader and legitimate that leader's right to rule.

Schumpeter also believed that leaders of countries would market themselves to the electorate based upon their abilities to lead[208]. He further argued that, due to a system where elections became more of a market choice than a discussion over policy, the "general will" of the people should be regarded as manufactured rather than genuine. He believed that the people were overly susceptible to pressures of interest groups such as corporations and their will would be a reflection of these groups' interests[209]. In terms of the electoral process, he believed the people "are, and can be, nothing more than 'producers of governments', a mechanism to select 'the men who are able to do the deciding."[210]

Schumpeter disagreed with Weber's belief that capitalist systems would eventually become socialist. This belief was not practical, as it did not take into account the increasing power and influence of both multi-national corporations and interest groups. This deficiency creates a necessity to draw on a neo-pluralism model of democracy, which recognizes the existence and power of these groups. The neo-pluralist model, as described by Held, derived from the ideas put forth by Weber and Schumpeter

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[207] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[208] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[209] Ibid., pp. 187-188.

[210] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

but with differences such as greater checks and balances between the legislature, executive, and judiciary[211]. The value of drawing from this model lies in its recognition of the complex relationships that exist between the state and interest groups, an aspect that was absent in the Competitive Elitist model.

The key features of the Neo-Pluralist model include an understanding that Canadian democracy is biased towards corporate power and unequal resources contribute to unequal representation in the political process. This model, when combined with key features of the Competitive Elitist model such as a parliamentary government with a strong executive, provides an accurate description of Canada's democratic structure.

The primary goal of Social Studies Curriculum:

To begin to understand how democratic theory, citizenship, and social studies curriculum are related, it is necessary to examine the primary goal of the Alberta senior high social studies program. The Alberta program of studies places primary emphasis on the development of responsible citizens in a democratic society[212]. The Program Rationale and Philosophy section states that social studies "assists students to acquire basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to be responsible citizens and contributing members of society"[213].

This broad objective focuses on citizenship education and implies an understanding that students will become contributing members of a Canadian democratic society. The curriculum also explores the definition of responsible citizenship and

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[211] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[212] Alberta Learning, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

emphasizes its importance. The definition of responsible citizenship provides an understanding of the primary goal of curriculum and is conducive to the classical democratic models of developmental republicanism and developmental democracy. It also implicitly promotes the understanding that the program is free from specific ideological constraints and political agendas.

The developmental republicanism model of democracy is strongly rooted in Rousseau's concept of the "general will" in which he argues that democratic ends are best met through the use of community government or a government that that is responsible to the general will of the people. By linking responsible citizenship to active participation in the political process, the objectives adhere to this concept.

The developmental democracy model is represented in the definition of responsible citizenship through the idea that participation will lead to students being informed of their "role, rights, and responsibilities."[214] This model was also heavily influenced by John Stuart Mill's argument that the development of a system that encouraged freedom of thought, expression, and action citizens would encourage citizens to respect the dignity and worth of others.

An understanding of what models of democracy the objectives of the curriculum adhere to is important, because there is a substantial difference between the models the objectives are based on and the model that the content is based on. The difference in the basis for each creates a curriculum where the content cannot achieve the objectives.

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[213] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[214] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The primary goal of the Alberta social studies program also implies an inclusive understanding of democratic theory whereby multiple models of democracy are taken into account. This creates an understanding that the curriculum is not restricted by exclusive understandings of democracy. By taking into account more than one form of democracy, the primary goal acts to provide students with an open approach to understanding citizenship and democracy while not being limited by pre-existing, evaluative judgements which would favour one form of democracy over another.

The philosophy that has impacted the development of social studies education (ranging from Plato to Charles Taylor) has also helped create an understanding of the primary goal. This understanding of the primary goal entails viewing curriculum as an opportunity to allow students to critically examine issues and concepts that impact their understanding of what citizenship is and how one should act as a citizen. This opportunity to openly examine and re-examine the foundations of society and the current national and international events which impact on everybody's lives provides students with the abilities they need to become active citizens while also moving them towards a state that Immanuel Kant would refer to as "enlightenment."[215] This state of enlightenment is where individuals gain the capacity to make decisions for themselves, thereby moving away from the need for paternalistic relationships between state and society.

The philosophical foundations of the primary goal also provide an understanding

[215] Immanuel Kant. Philosophical Writings. 1782. Ed. Ernst Behler. (New York, NY: 1991.) pp. 263-269.

that curriculum should not be rooted in any one ideology[216]. The philosophical and moral foundations of the primary goal stem from numerous philosophical works ranging from those rooted in classical Liberalism (Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau) to those of classical conservatism (Edmund Burke). The diversity in these philosophical roots has grown as modern philosophy has begun to introduce ideological diversity as an ideology (Charles Taylor) and citizenship as an ideology (Michael Ignatieff). The diversity of ideology within the philosophy alludes to the idea that, within the primary goal, there is an implicit understanding that social studies curriculum should not be devoid of ideology nor should it be designed around a single ideology. Rather, it should encompass all ideologies. This understanding is conducive to a philosophical emphasis that allows students to critically examine all subject matter; because, to become enlightened, students must come to understand all ideologies and able to critically access for themselves which ideologies are best suited to the development of a democratic society.

The primary goal of senior high school social studies curriculum in Alberta has evolved through the linear development of classical and modern philosophy. This philosophy provides a detailed understanding about how concepts of citizenship and democracy should be open to critical analysis by students in an attempt to facilitate the development of responsible citizens who are able to actively participate in a democratic

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[216] Within this thesis Ideology can be defined according to the definition put forth by Gibbons and Youngman (1996). On page six of the book Mindscapes:Political Ideologies Towards the 21st Century they define Ideology as "a socially constructed and transmitted system of political beliefs with some significant measure of formal articulation, scope, internal constituency and durability. As such, it provides both a normative framework for understanding the political world and a practical guide for political action." With this understanding I am not advocating a curriculum that is devoid of any ideology but rather I believe curriculum can incorporate many different ideologies without becoming entrenched in one.

society. This understanding of the primary goal is inclusive: it does not advocate that students be instructed to adopt a specific understanding of citizenship or ideology nor does it specify that students should conform to a single democratic model. This perception of the primary goal suggests that knowledge objectives with the curriculum should be the means by which students attain the tools they need to make evaluative judgements regarding the adoption of ideologies and the most beneficial forms of citizenship and democracy. The knowledge objectives should facilitate the development of responsible citizens who actively participate in the design and implementation of democracy and democratic reforms in an attempt to make them consistent with evolutions in modern notions of citizenship.

Alberta Curriculum Content: Applying the Canadian Democratic Model

When the Canadian democratic structure is understood as a combination of the Competitive Elitist model and the Neo-Pluralist model, it becomes apparent how the knowledge objectives of curriculum conflict with the primary goal of the social studies curriculum. Because the content of the curriculum is a political construct, the democratic model upon which the Canadian government operates directly affects it. To specifically understand where and how this influence takes place, it is necessary to examine the curriculum content – otherwise known as the knowledge objectives of curriculum. Refining the scope of this examination will only apply the Canadian democratic model to the social studies 20 curriculum.

The social studies 20 curriculum "examine[s] nationalism, industrialization, imperialism and international rivalries and their effect on the development and interaction

of nations."[217] The curriculum also explores "diversity, development, quality of life and alternative futures."[218] This broad definition of the curriculum provides a general understanding of the direction of the content, which is broken into two different topics: (1) the development and interaction of nations in nineteenth century Europe and (2) interdependence in the global environment. Within this content, the subject matter is divided into themes, generalizations and key understandings, concepts, and related facts and content.

In the initial topic students examine four different themes: (1) nationalism, (2) industrialization, (3) ideologies, and (4) imperialism. Within these themes, students are exposed to the concepts of egalitarianism, liberalism, conservatism, legitimacy, capitalism, socialism, and communism as they study nineteenth century Europe[219]. This exposure to concepts is linked to the development of key understandings which students are expected to know.

Throughout this topic, the key understandings students must gain are detached from their understandings of Canadian society. They are denied, throughout this topic, opportunities to apply concepts. Rather, they are simply asked to understand what these concepts are and how they developed. Students, when asked to approach topics in this manner, are denied the opportunity to critically examine the society in which they live

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[217] Alberta Education, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[218] *Ibid.*, p.33.

[219] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30.

and develop what John Stuart Mill referred to as any "real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience."[220]

This deficiency in the curriculum serves the existing democratic structure as students conform to the "mass" mould both Weber and Schumpeter envisioned. This conception of the masses, as too susceptible to market influences and unable to discriminate amongst policies, is not a natural state as they assumed; rather, it is a product of the educational system. Because the system restricts students' abilities to critically examine concepts, they do not develop the necessary understandings needed to be active members of society. This relegates them to a limited role leaving the political decisions to a few expert politicians and an extensive bureaucracy. The eventual outcome of this process is that students will enter into the democratic process without the necessary skills to actively participate in it. This lack of skills reduces their role to one of legitimization at best, as they are only capable of choosing who they perceive to be the most effective leader.

The second social studies 20 topic is divided into four different themes that cover various key understandings and concepts. To examine this portion of the curriculum, it is important to carefully observe the different key understandings and to understand the impact of the Canadian democratic model.

Within the first theme in this topic (global diversity), one key understanding for students is that "diversity and disparity exist in the modern world."[221] Although this key understanding is important, it does not provide students an opportunity to critically access

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[220] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women,* (Hertfordshire, Great Britain, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1996.), p. 53.
[221] Alberta Education, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

either the value of diversity or to explore whether disparity needs to exist. These questions are of key importance in setting future directions of Canadian development; yet, students are not encouraged to ask them. By providing students with key understandings that are limited in scope and do not encourage critical thought, the curriculum denies them the opportunity to develop a critical consciousness. This limitation leads to gaps between the electorate and elected/bureaucracy as the electorate is denied the opportunity to access whether government policies should take new directions.

Another key understanding, that of "there are factors that affect development," is important. But, again, it fails to help students critically access what factors should affect development[222]. This question is critical, considering that, in the related facts and content, there is a lack of social equality considerations such as women's rights and citizen involvement in economic policy. By denying students the real possibility to explore many possible avenues of discourse because it is not legitimated by the curriculum, the narrow scope of the key understandings limits their capacity to reason and contribute to the creation of possible development alternatives. Aside from the contingent efforts of individual teachers working within the limits of the curriculum, this contributes to the widening of the gap between the electorate and the elected officials/bureaucracy in their grasp of political concepts which can be applied to the everyday life of democratic practice.

The Canadian democratic system also affects the curriculum by its avoidance of issues that may lead to a citizen criticizing government policy. An example can be seen in

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[222] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

the key understanding that "solutions to global concerns often require international dialogue."[223] Although this understanding appears true and necessary, it fails to address questions such as whether the dialogue is effective, what role it should take, where it should take it and when, and whether existing forms of discourse are adding or subtracting to inequality. In light of the World Trade Organization riots in Seattle and the People's Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, it seems as though a curriculum should allow students to challenge existing forms of international discourse. Yet, this does not occur. As such protests become more prominent in response to globalization trends, there is an elevated need for students to become more critical of globalization and the international discourses that surround it. This increased interest in the globalization discourse is essential for students as it will have a direct impact upon their lives and yet curriculum fails to encourage this. By limiting the curriculum our existing democratic system does not allow students to openly engage in the critical analysis of issues and, due to this, students find themselves lacking the necessary tools to criticize government policy and effect positive change in policy.

Through the examination of the second topic one can see the influence of the Canadian democratic model. Though the key understandings it becomes clear how the influence of the Competitive Elitist/Neo-Pluralist democratic system serves to limit student abilities. By limiting student abilities, the system denies students the opportunity to engage in criticism of the government as well as denying them the opportunity to formulate alternatives to existing government policies. This maintains the elitist characteristics of the system and helps to restrict the electorate to a solely legitimizing

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[223] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

role. These limitations lead to the growth of the gap that exists between the electorate and the elected officials/bureaucracy and legitimize the existing system. As this gap extends, it serves to rationalize the existence of the system and for this reason the role of education cannot be understated for the propagation of the existing democratic system.

Citizenship, Democracy, and Social Studies Education:

The primary goal of the program provides a clear path from which the knowledge objectives should follow but, as seen in the social studies 20 program of studies, this does not occur. The social studies curriculum for senior high school in Alberta falls away from its initial intent by serving the interests of the Canadian democratic state through the knowledge objectives. By denying students the opportunity to critically examine issues and government policies, the curriculum inhibits them from gaining the necessary tools to actively participate in the progressive evolution of Canadian democracy. This action causes the greatest conflict with the primary goal of the program because it no longer encourages students to critically think nor act as responsible citizens but rather it produces students who understand citizenship to be nothing more than an act of legitimization whereby the state adopts a paternalistic role with the electorate. Thus, the social studies education becomes an agent of the state as it attempts to conform the population into a form of citizenship conducive to its interests. Students are denied the opportunity to critically develop their own notions of what citizenship should be and ignores evolutions of popular citizenship which conflict with the states interests. This state action acts to restrain modern citizenship movements which have attempted to make

society more inclusive thus restraining government power and disrupting the Canadian democratic model[224].

As citizenship continues to evolve and challenge the existing democratic structures, there is a need for education to take a leading role in enabling students to begin to explore alternatives. By enabling students to engage in discourses surrounding democratic possibilities, the curriculum can create possibilities that have not previously existed and create a citizenry capable of participating in most aspects of governance. This change in curriculum can ensure that democratic structures become responsive to the needs and desires of the Canadian population, thereby allowing democracy to evolve along with citizenship in a manor that is equitable to all Canadians.

To conform to the primary goal of the social studies curriculum students must be able to openly engage the material that they are taught without having material presented to them in a biased fashion. If students are to act as responsible citizens, they must be informed as to the system in which they exist and alternatives to that system. Social studies curriculum must stand apart from the interests of any given state and allow students to develop the skills necessary to actively participate in the formation and activities of the state. Students must not simply learn about the democratic state in which they live, but also other forms of democracy that exist in practice and in theory. This enables them to develop critical thinking skills necessary to become active citizens, while also enabling them to actively participate and evaluate democratic practices rather than to

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[224] See Michael Ignatieff, *op. cit.* In The Rights Revolution Ignatieff discusses how the rights revolution in Canada is an effort to make Canadian society more inclusive. He goes on to argue that the Canadian democratic model has not yet evolved to meet the rising challenge by Canadians in a vain effort to retain power for the elites that have historically dominated the system.

serve only legitimizing functions. By enabling students to actively engage in the exploration of democratic principles, the curriculum can work to strengthen students appreciation for democracy and move away from being a political construct. This can facilitate the opening of new discourses in the classroom and in education regarding what democracy and citizenship can and should be.

Questions such as what our democracy is and what it should be are necessary because they help us understand how the system works upon us, rather than for us. With clearer understandings, Canadians are better able to work towards the adoption of alternative democratic models so they may improve the democratic process and create opportunities for greater participation in it. This action is the only way Canadians can liberate themselves to become autonomous and active democratic citizens.

Future Possibilities

"Therefore whosoever heareth these saying of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."[225]

The writings of St. Mathew allow us to consider all we have discovered in our analysis of curriculum and describe it metaphorically. St. Mathew helps us understand that our analysis of curriculum serves a purpose; it enables us to securely anchor an educational system and by extension the liberal democracy it serves to perpetuate and protect. Applying the words of St. Mathew also helps us see how the social studies curriculum is the house and the foundations of the curriculum are the foundations upon which the house sits. If the curriculum is to withstand the storms of discontent, be they in the disenchantment of students or public displeasure with public education, the curriculum must be based on solid foundations. To build these strong foundations, the curriculum must consistently and assuredly understand and remain true to its original foundations, those founded upon the writings of Kant and Mill and extended by Taylor.

To fail in this understanding is to have the foundations erode into the sand. When this occurs the house of curriculum shall fall under the storms of discontent. Education and our treasured liberal democracy can ill afford such an event. It is imperative for social studies educators and curriculum designers to return to the foundations to renew their

[225] Mathew. 7:24-27.

understandings and, from this action, rebuild the curriculum upon rock foundations so that it may withstand the storms that will assuredly occur.

The voices of Kant, Mill, Dewey and Taylor have provided us with not only personal direction, but also with a broader educational and societal direction. They not only explain enlightenment, but they also provide direction in attaining enlightenment. Their voices helps us construct the foundations and importance of social studies education and its imperative role in the enlightenment of the individual. These philosophers give direction to our lives and the institutions that exist within them; they provide us with grounding in life. These voices move us to act with resolve and imagination.

It is through the acknowledgment of the philosophical foundations of the curriculum that we can attain the means to build a new program; one that has greater potential to fully realize the primary goal of the program. A new curriculum based on the framework explored here and the knowledge gained from examining the existence of paradoxical relationships will be able to open up new spaces for critical learning that have not yet been explored in Alberta classrooms.

In creating new spaces for learning we may be able to create a social studies program that empowers students enabling them to move beyond an understanding of the world today and towards a vision for tomorrow.

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